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THE WIRELESS PLOT

-:- Or -:-

On Dead Man's Reef

By Marquis James

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CHAPTER I.

"SHE'S somewhere near. Her wireless is kicking like a mule. Seen anything yet?" The wind tore the last shouted words from the speaker's lips, and he clutched the belt about the greatcoat of his companion to prevent his being swept from the spray-drenched promontory into the dark, abysmal sea two hundred feet down the crags.

The greatcoated man, lashed by a rope of his own tying to an uprising splinter of rock, turned and was about to shake his head in negation when from the thundering heavens a pale light burst upon them, revealing below them the plunging sea, back of them the mouth of a cave, and all about the towering precipices of the Alaskan coast mountains. The light came from a rocket of a ship at sea.

The greatcoated man turned again to his companion.

"We've got 'em now, Bill. They're on Dead Man's reef."

Jim Darling's voice was grave. Both men shielded their eyes from the dashing salt spray, and peered again into the baffling blackness that overhung the sea. It was a tense moment.

"Yes, we've landed her, Jim. Hooray!" The man who clung to the belt of the lookout lashed to the rocks yelled his jubilation. "What say, boy? We've got 'em good, eh? What say, boy, what say? Can't you talk?"

Bill was at a loss to interpret his companion's silence in this moment of triumph.

"What's the matter, Jim?" he inquired, after a pause.

"Just thinking," Jim replied quietly.

"Thinkin'?" Bill exploded. "'Bout what?"

"About the lives of those out yonder."

"Them? Oh, h—l," muttered Bill in disgust.

Another distress signal from the boat at sea spiraled into the sky. A chain of lightning tumbled from the heavens. Its ghostly glare revealed the scene aboard ship. The mate was on the bridge, a megaphone to his lips. Snatches of his bellowed orders were swept on the wings of the storm to the ears of the watchers on the mainland cliff. Seamen dashed hither and thither on the deck below.

The situation was desperate. The deck was awash. The gold ship City of Nome rode square on the rocks of Dead Man's reef and fast was going to pieces!

"Seven million in her middle hold, they say, Jim. Leastwise that's what she cleared with from Nome, according to what Whitehead Davey flashed us from St. Michaels."

Bill reopened the conversation, continuing:

"With such seas runnin', tho, we'll be

in luck to get the half of it. It'll be an hour before we're ready to board her, then. I'll go inside and tell 'em."

Without reply from Jim Darling the man departed. Working his way methodically around the ledge path, cut in the solid side of the cliff, he vanished into the maw of the cave.

Jim's gaze was fixed upon the sea. What he saw held it there.

Bill delivered his message and returned. He found Jim more talkative than before.

"Bill," he said, "you've been a pal of mine since I've ran afoul with this cut. I want to tell you something—something I want you to keep under your hat. I'll feel better with it off my chest."

"What is it, Jimmy." Big Bill's voice was softer now. "This business getting on your nerves? You're not cut out for this sort of work, I guess."

The inflection made the words a question.

"Yes, Bill," replied the other. "It is getting on my nerves. It's your advice I want now."

"Fire away, Jimmy."

"Is mum the word?"

"My hand on it," and you know what the breaking of it means."

"Death, I know. And I've given my word—a big word's my word—that is, in any case but this. I'm going to die trying."

But Bill found no words for reply at once. Both men gazed out upon the sea, upon the drama being enacted there. They saw the sailormen fighting their losing battle to save the ship and save themselves; fighting to the last with relentless fate—but fighting, nevertheless. It appalled Jim Darling's consciousness.

Bill looked on unapprehensive.

"Sonny," he said, at length, reverting to Jim's question, "it's a ticklish proposition."

But for all his uncouth exterior Bill was versed somewhat in the finer causes that lead men to ruination.

"But I'll do what I can," he added.

Jim's face beamed.

"I knew you would," he said, grasping his companion's hand. "I knew I could depend on you!"

"But let your horses, pardner," counseled Bill, with the intent of staying the young man's dangerous enthusiasm. "I said I'd do what I could. I can't say that I'll promise to aim high, if you take the chance. But don't count on that. There's others you can't count on, and I'm considerate; and they're pretty handy with a rifle, too."

Jim was disappointed. But on reflection he realized he did Bill an injustice to ask him to abet his escape further. He had his own neck to risk when he'd dealing with traitors the chief brooked no half measures. Bill witnessed his friend's distress and laid a friendly hand upon his shoulder.

"Jim," he said, "I ain't asking no questions. I don't ought to, but, of course, I wouldn't be saying anything when I got away. Excuse me, Jim, for saying it, but I didn't put you down for a gentleman, as they call 'em in the States. I saved your life when I found you wandering in the dark and helped get the chief to take you in. I stood for you, and you ain't the kind that forgets. But you see as it would look to me if you should get away and then something would turn up."

"Bill, that's just it. I——"

"My God! Has the man gone crazy?" exclaimed Bill. "Jim, you ain't asking me to save your life and then run, just so you can go and take mine? You ain't aiming to squeal?"

"Bill, you put it hard. You saved my life—you did it with your hands. And whatever my shortcomings are, God knows ingratitude isn't one among them. Perhaps you had better let me die. But a man forgets everything when it's a question of saving the life——"

Jim cut his sentence short, but Bill already had guessed.

"It's a cold you what brought me to Alaska," was the simple statement Jim substituted for the unfinished remark.

"A girl, you mean," Bill divined bluntly.

"Yes, Bill, it was. The girl—she——"

"Box," interposed the elder man, and a mysterious softness crept into his rough voice. "you carry me back. I might have been a gentleman once—she had lived. Wait until next month when we get the Portland—it's a big job, sure. We'll strike out together. But you're squealing."

Jim did not answer right away.

"The Portland?" he gasped, at last the name stung him. "That's why I'm going now—that's why I've given my word to help me get out. I've given you warning, Bill Goodrich. Aim high or low, as you please. I'll try if I know they'll shoot me down in the attempt."

"How what's the matter with the Portland, Job? You're all worked up. One more won't hurt. And besides your payoff is getting up in figures."

"I share no payoff—not a cent. And the Portland—you'll never sink her as long as Jim Darling breathes a breath of life."

"And why?"

"You know who sails the Portland?"

"Yes, Bainbridge."

"And you know who ships with him—who'll be aboard when you plan to send the Portland to the bottom?"

"Don't know no one in particular, Jim. Portland don't carry passengers."

"I'm not speaking of passengers."

"Who, then? Member of the crew?"

"Or member of the crew. It's Virginia Bainbridge, the skipper's daughter."

"Well?"

"You idiot! I could toss you off this cliff! She's the girl—the girl! Turned me down cold, and I'll die for her loving. But she doesn't die in this Arctic sea at the hands of these gold pirates."

"But they wouldn't send her to the bottom."

Jim caught the portent of the other's words.

"I'd tear the heart out of the man who touched a hair of her head!" he shouted. "You or anybody else—Bainbridge, by the gods I would. But they won't have the chance. I'm gone before tomorrow, and by that token so is Bainbridge. Dead from Nome, or my bones find all the grave they deserve on top of ground between here and Nome."

A hoarse command from within the cave broke off the strange colloquy and brought Jim Darling, Goodrich, by the arm back to the grim business at hand.

CHAPTER II.

COME on, you scalawags. Forget that chawin' match and pay some mind to what's going on. She's founderin' out there. Shake a leg!"

The two men on the outer ledge stiffened at the thought that the wind might have carried the words to other ears. Jim carefully unlashed the rope that held him, like a skyscraper window-washer, secure in the cave mouth. With Goodrich he made his way carefully along the path to the entrance of the cavern in the cliff.

Within that subterranean chamber was congregated as desperate a gang of criminals as ever had been assembled under one leader. Gathered from the four corners of the earth, these international heads of the underworld were reaping a reward in loot that had been beyond their wildest dreams. Millions in good yellow gold dust and nuggets they counted. They represented the dregs of every nationality on earth. Their terrible leader was a giant Spaniard by the name of Eduardo Salazar. He was the brains, as well as the brawn, of the band which numbered respectively Englishmen, Americans and the Emerald Isle, a swarthy Italian or so, a Swede, two Americans—Darling and Bill Goodrich—a Cuban and even a Russian. That a Russian should be identified with the enterprise grows more remarkable as the narrative of Jim Darling's thrilling adventures unfolds itself.

Salazar, who had been a sailor, and had thus picked up a working and swearing knowledge of every language on the globe, was the only member of the band in his native tongue. With the fear of death in their hearts, these desperate men obeyed him.

The cavern which sheltered the band was of Nature's own making, a noble handiwork dedicated to Neptune alone. Back in unrecorded eons, when the world was young, some giant hand had tunneled two legs into the cliff, and then wedged them fast, forming a natural roof, upon the which the residue of passing centuries had piled and piled until a mountain accrued. The mouth of the cave appeared as bored in the solid rock of a sheer cliff that rose sheer from the sea. This was approached from the narrow fringe of beach by steps, hewn from the rock. From there the mouth there had been constructed a runway for the purpose of launching boats.

A ledge cut from the mouth of the cave along the perpendicular wall of the cliff served as a landing stage upon which the bandits sighted their seagoing prey. It was by this ledge that Jim Darling and Bill Goodrich, two Americans in the motley company, entered the cave.

The narrow entrance of the cave opened into a sort of lobby, roughly of circular shape and about twelve feet in diameter. Situated here was a bank of wireless instruments, an apparatus which played an indispensable and uncanny part in the enterprise of the conspirators. At the far end of this underground antechamber, another narrow portal communicated with a vast, lofty, subterranean auditorium. Its limits were undefinable from the entrance. The smoking, smelly oil lamps, which burned continually, lighted but a small proportion of the great cavern. Voices echoed and re-echoed, sending the waves in the unexplored, galleried, rugged walls. The effect was unbelievably weird.

"Avast there! Man the boat!"

The shouted command came from Salazar.

"It's risky business, but we've got to board her, men," he added.

The yawl, specially constructed for riding high seas, was rolled into position on the runway. The men clambered aboard, Darling and Goodrich taking their positions in the bow.

With every man in his place at the oars and Salazar himself at the tiller, the word was given, and the open boat shot down the ways into the plunging ocean. It fell in the trough of a wave which swept it out to sea. The small craft shipped water heavily. Time and time again it appeared that it could not live in the gale-lashed waters. The peril of the situation, however, spurred the buffeted crew to almost superhuman efforts, and slowly the boat worked its way to open sea, where a league from the shore lay the mighty City of Nome, doomed and helpless on Dead Man's reef.

When near enough to be heard, Salazar fired a revolver in the air to attract the attention of those aboard the gold ship. A rocket from the grounded craft was sent up in reply. The men on the lost ship took heart again, for they believed rescuers approached.

The yawl won its way to the side of the City of Nome, and after several failures, finally a ratline was cast from the small boat to the deck of the larger one. A sailor started to descend the heaving rope ladder to safety. A command from Salazar sent him back. In obedience to imperative orders, Darling and Goodrich, who were in the bow of the yawl, scrambled up the ratline to the deck of the ship. Others of the desperado band followed. The captain and crew of the Nome yawl were in this manner taken prisoners, but did not suspect the fate that awaited them.

Without preliminaries Salazar, drawing a brace of pistols, ordered the crew to line up, hands overhead, by the starboard bow. Darling heard and saw the cave crew, Salazar, with a few picked followers, went below, and presently appeared on deck with heavy chests of gold.

Meantime the City of Nome was shipping water with every billow and listing heavily by the stern. Twenty minutes had been consumed in the entering of the cave and the loading of the yawl from the middle hold. Members of the captive crew looked on, terrified, assured by Salazar's belief that the lives of their own eyes at first—that they actually had been overhauled by pirates, under one leader. Gathered from the and bloodthirsty as ever roamed the Spanish main in the eighteenth century, rich—a Cuban and even a Russian. That a Russian should be identified with the enterprise grows more remarkable as the narrative of Jim Darling's thrilling adventures unfolds itself.

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ning so high as before. Now and then a timid flash of lightning came, sufficient, however, to light up the water and reveal the drifting wreckage of the gold ship. Bill glanced up and down the coast. His mind was in a turmoil.

"My God! The woman! Suppose he should find her. I never thought." Bill Goodrich shuddered at the thought of the discovery of his wife by Salazar. The past two hours had made a changed man of him.

His eye was riveted on the coastline, when suddenly a bolt of lightning revealed a man, drifting on a spar of the wrecked ship. A wave tossed him onto the narrow beach. Then darkness clapped down her somber hood and Goodrich saw no more.

"One of the crew saved. Lord, if I only could get word to him about the girl! Great Scott! Jim! It couldn't be—"

Without an instant's hesitation, Goodrich was on his perilous way down the trail that led to the foot of the cliff at reckless speed. The beach gained, he started down the water's edge at a dead run in the direction of where he had seen the man tossed upon the sands.

"Castaway ahoy! Jim! Is it you?"

He shouted at the top of his lungs, but the deafening roar of the pounding sea drowned his cries.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Bill Goodrich prosecuted his fruitless search of the storm-swept coast for trace of the survivor of the City of Nome he had seen cast up on the shore, Eduardo Salazar and his heartless retinue snored and snoozed in the cave in the cliff, unmindful of the activities of Goodrich. Bill's secret, the secret of the woman concealed in the grotto, remained—for the time being, at least—secure.

A strange, strange enterprise, indeed, was that of Salazar, this greatest of pirates of modern days. The exploits of Sir Francis Drake, who sailed the seven seas and preyed on Spanish ore ships, dividing the spoils ashore and share alike with his queen, the good Elizabeth, were those of a mere shoplifter as compared with the exploits of Salazar's True. Eduardo Salazar moved in no circles of state, nor received the blandishments of a sovereign queen as did his English predecessor; but who may hold that this was not to his fortune, for sovereign queens are capricious—witness the fact that good Queen Bess in a moment of pique topped off Walter Raleigh's head, and Sir Walter had been a court favorite of no less degree than Sir Francis. So Salazar may else said not to have missed a great deal in having his freebooting enterprise officially sponsored by no government.

Salazar's prey was ships bearing Russian gold to the United States, in payment for millions of dollars' worth of munitions of battle sent from America to the Czar's kingdom to aid in the prosecution of the war against the Central Powers. During the first of the war the gold was shipped straight from Vladivostok to San Francisco, but a German submarine, prowling its way around Good Hope and into the Pacific, put a sudden stop to this. The Russians, however, had to have their munitions, and in return the Yankee war material dealers had to have their gold. So, in secret, a little scheme was hatched to foil the Kaiser's lone undersea rover of the Pacific.

A Russian syndicate bought up sufficient gold in Alaska, from whence it was shipped under false manifest to Seattle—the little matter of the altered manifests having been arranged, unofficially, the quite satisfactorily, nevertheless, with the German authorities at the port of Nome. In this way the traffic was carried on for many months. The German undersea commander stroked his mustachios and wondered why the gold shipments had so suddenly ceased to come his way—he chuckled as he reckoned his diligence had discouraged the practice. All the time, however, a steady stream of bullion was pouring into the United States from Alaska. The gold ships' papers showed cargoes of mineral deeds, and in some instances even the ship's captain was in ignorance of the true nature of his argosy. Members of the crew always were.

Just how Eduardo Salazar got wind of this little interlude in the subterfuge probably never will be known. Suffice to say he did get wind of it, however. At that time Salazar was master of a tramp steamer in the opium-smuggling trade between China and the Philippines. Opium smuggling is the least profitable of seafaring ventures in the Eastern waters, but when Salazar learned of the Russian gold consignments flashed upon him a brilliant idea that made him more than eager to quit the illicit drug trade.

So, accordingly, he gathered his crew from as desperate a lot of cutthroats as ever sailed the tropic seas, and with all plans laid, turned his ship's prow tramp north to the Arctic. Salazar had previous knowledge of the wonderful cave on the Alaska coast, and he also had come by the information that Dead Man's reef, an uncharted deathtrap of the ocean, was near by, if he could have set the stage for his endeavor himself he could not have improved Nature's craftsmanship.

With a powerful wireless outfit set up in the mouth of the cave he waited until the gold-laden vessels should be within hailing distance. This, he was able to reckon to a nicety by wireless communication with Whitehead Davey, his agent in St. Michaels, who flashed the date of departure of each ship from the Nome harbor. When the gold ship neared the reef, he flashed out S. O. S. signals from the cave, giving the longitude and latitude of the supposed ship in distress as the precise location of Dead Man's reef. Thus, the ore craft, in hurrying to the rescue, would encounter the sunken shoal and be wrecked. This part of the business always was carried on at night, and on a stormy night, if possible, so those aboard the gold ship could not discover the deception. Once wrecked, the boats were salvaged, as the City of Nome had been, and its gold hauled off into the cave.

Before Jim Darling became a member of Salazar's band, Bill Goodrich was the only American in the company. It may be said without making apologies for Goodrich that he was not so bad as most of his companions. Goodrich had been a hail-fellow-well-met, but with a restless spirit. After his mother's death he gratified his life's desire and took to sea. Ill-chosen associates and a thirst for adventure had taken him down by swift degrees.

After twenty years of knockabout existence, we find him shipping on a P. & O. freighter from Singapore to Port Said, with a wild Irishman of the name of Mike O'Donnell for a bunkie. O'Donnell was a man of widespread acquaintance in certain maritime circles of the Orient, and when Salazar was picking his men for the expedition he was said to take part. He did so with eagerness, mentioning to Salazar at the time that he knew of a likely tar, an American of the name of Goodrich, who would be a good hand for such an undertaking. Salazar needed men and said to bring the fellow aboard.

O'Donnell delivered the goods without trouble. A veiled outline of the undertaking, with a hint now and then of daring deeds to be done, and the impetuous American was all for it. And so, as one takes a leap in the dark, Goodrich embarked with Salazar, out of impulsive yearning for adventure. Once in Alaska and confronted with the true situation, his spirit rebelled, but it was too late to turn back. He had given his oath to be faithful under the penalty of death. And Goodrich had no misgivings concerning Salazar's hesitancy to put that penalty into effect should he exhibit any signs of disapproval with the way matters were conducted. So, true to his Yankee perspicacity, Goodrich realized the predicament his rashness had wrought for him, and deeming discretion the better part of valer, determined to make the best of it. All of which was far from an unwise resolution.

Now, Jim Darling's advent into Salazar's band is a different story—an unusual story, and one that loses in the telling. While Goodrich had come from good, loyal, average American stock, James Jeffery Darling Jr. was born into the world with the proverbial silver spoon firmly clenched between his toothless jaws. James Jeffery Darling, railroad magnate and many times a millionaire, was able and disposed to give his son and namesake anything a boy well might desire. In San Francisco, where the Darlings lived, young James Jr. grew up among the most favoring environs, social, educational and otherwise. His problem of life was solved. It was a cut-and-dried matter. He would, in time, succeed his father as president of the vast railroad system he had flung across the great divide.

This seemingly ideal state of affairs, however, was not to the liking of the young scion of millions and heir apparent to a transcontinental railroad. He was a democratic youngster, despite the autocratic restrictions thrown about him by his father's wealth. He believed in a man going about and fighting his own battles and standing or falling on his merits. As a matter of fact, he was just a plain, ordinary, everyday American youth, and not the young snob his doting father and superaristocratic mother had tried their level best to make of him. He was not a whit different from Bill Goodrich, and in Bill's circumstances might have done the same as Bill—or even worse.

Accordingly, upon his graduation from the University of California at Berkeley, Jim Darling boarded one of his father's trains for the lumber camps of Oregon—this instead of returning to San Francisco and occupying a place on the board of directors of the road. And the freight brakeman, who spied Jim riding the rods and who kicked him off because he refused to cross the trainman's palm with silver, had not the remotest idea he was dealing with the son of the owner of the line. Jim got to Oregon finally, tho, and went to work in a lumber camp. But the wanderlust was in him, and four months later found him in Seattle.

It was there he met Virginia Bainbridge, daughter of the skipper of the good ship Portland. Now, the San Francisco society editors had long since been writing about the "rumored engagement" of James Jeffery Darling Jr. to Miss Claribel Lucile Birmingham. But that had been the society editors' doings and not Jim's. While certain dowagers, Mrs. Darling and Mrs. Birmingham among them, might have willed it, Jim had no intention of marrying Claribel Lucile, and thus forming a coalition between the two wealthiest families on the coast. In fact, Jim's ideas on the subject of matrimony had been rather undeveloped—that is, until he met Virginia Bainbridge, the skipper's daughter.

It wasn't so very long after he had landed in Seattle until Jim found occasion to propose marrying Miss Bainbridge.

"Marry a lumberjack?" the certain's lass replied scornfully. "Hardly, Jimmy. I do like you in an awful lot," she explained, "but the man I marry must make his mark in the world first. Why, I wouldn't marry a millionaire's son unless he got out and showed he could earn his salt."

Jim, rather nonplused at this retort to his ardent petition, asked Virginia what she would suggest in the way of his going out and making a name for himself.

"Why, anything," she answered without hesitation. "Try Alaska. Go up there and do something. I don't care if you don't bring back a million dollars. All I want is the proof that you're a real man, and not one day be was caught in a blinding Arctic snowstorm a mile from camp. In the terrific blizzard he lost his way. For hours he wandered the Arctic wastes, knowing he was lost and knowing that likely as not every step was taking him farther and farther from camp and the chances of eventual rescue. Yet he could not stop. He had to keep moving or freeze to death. So on and on he tramped. At last, when he could go no farther, when his spent limbs and flagging nerves refused to carry him another foot, he sank down in the snow. Then came oblivion.

When he resumed consciousness, he heard the sound of noises about him. A man bent over his form.

"Pretty close call you had, old pal," came the comforting words in his ear.

But the voice was strange. He glanced about. The faces were strange. He had not been picked up, then, by men from his own camp.

Thru the offices of Bill Goodrich, who felt the call of blood for a fellow American, Jim's life had been saved. He had been picked up by a party of Salazar's band on a reconnoitering tour. While it was not the usual thing for Salazar to welcome strangers into the secrets of his organization, Bill Goodrich's pleas carried the day and Jim was spared. Grateful for his life, he could not hesitate to join Salazar, and to profess a hearty sympathy for his enterprise. Thus Darling became one of the pirates.

And while a natural intimacy sprang up between Goodrich and Jim Darling, neither spoke of his past life or revealed his longing to desert Salazar, both mutually fearing to forsake the other to that extent. For a disclosure of such harbored thoughts would have meant instant death. But when Jim Darling learned of the plan to wreck the Portland—the ship which carried Virginia Bainbridge and her father—he could stand it no longer. That was the culminating straw which broke his resistance. Jim Darling, on the eve of the wrecking of the City of Nome, he confided to Goodrich as much of his secret as he dared. And Bill was worthy of the trust.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of The Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber to this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription! It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Darling carried the battle to his opponent.

SOME GIRL!

If I should all my dreams impart
Of life to write in my heart
And fill my life with perfect bliss
Her portrait would appear like this:

A pretty girl, a witty girl,
A girl who loves to smile;
A darling girl, no saintly girl—
She'd bore me all the while;
A laughing girl, a chaffing girl,
A comrade, loyal and true;
The neatest girl, the sweetest girl,
In fact, man ever knew.

Yes, charms a-plenty I include
In this dream maiden I have wooed;
Grace, beauty, orden, kindness, wit.
That she's SOME GIRL you must admit.

A Good Dog, Too.

A British sentry had considerable trouble with a batch of German prisoners who behaved in a high-handed and insolent manner. On being reprimanded, one of the latter, drawing himself to his full height, exclaimed:

"Don't you know I vos a Pomeranian?"

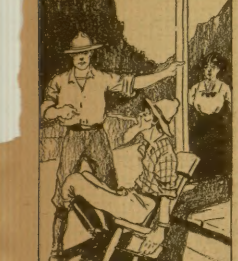
"It dinna matter if ye were a Newfoundland," was Tommy's answer; "ye've got tae gie in tae the British bulldog."

HIS PURPLE CAT

-:- Or, -:-

A Real Gold Cure

By Eduardo Hilario Griffith



"Will fifty dollars do?"

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CHAPTER I.

TAIN'T never been hotter in Campos in my time," said Old Ike Taylor suddenly to Jim McDonald, owner of the livery stable.

"Nope," came drowsily from McDonald, half dosing in a chair on the hotel veranda. Old Ike paused in peeling a cane of eucalyptus and irrigated the base of an orange tree with a high pressure stream of tobacco juice.

He looked toward the desert. A pearly gray haze hung over it this morning. His dim eyes could not see the Salton Sea, but his finely cut nostrils dilated appreciatively as they sniffed the clear, arid air. That desert! It had beaten him always, baffled and balked his heroic efforts and mocked his cherished dream. He had sworn to find the Peg-Leg mine.

This determination still burned within him, altho the flesh was weak and trembling. He knew he should probably never find it. But one of these days he was going to try again. The worst that could come, he told himself, would be the long sleep and a final peace out there in the great mysterious wastes—and this sleep was not far off for him, anyhow.

Yet there lurked in the back of his mind that undying belief, the Fata Morgana of the chronic prospector, that he would some day make "just one more strike."

"Must be a-goin' purty soon now," he was thinking, "or some of them newfangled gold hunters with their automobile outfits carryin' water enough for a month, will beat me to it."

Old Ike had been a character in Campos for forty years. To the younger generation he was but a relic of the old days, a cheerful, childish old man whose enjoyment in life consisted of dreaming of the Peg-Leg, masticating fine cut, and whittling canes for tourists. As an aid to badness that had "sort o' petered out," to use Ike's phrase.

"They don't seem to care for my canes like they used to," he said plaintively to McDonald that morning.

The old man had drawn his pension the day before.

"Hey, Mac, listen, will ye?" said he, shaking the livery man's arm.

"Yep, what is it?" was the mild came to life reluctantly—his motto was "manana—tomorrow.

"I got some four dollars gold, Mac."

"Gonna buy an auto?" McDonald inquired, with languid sarcasm.

"That would make a start out that afore the Post sends a firin' squad up here to bury me with honors, that's what," responded the old miner with some heat. "What'll ye take for yere borro—the one what's lame and bald-faced and spavined?"

"Sixteen dollars, Ike," said McDonald, lazily—the old man had talked of buying the burro for months, as he had talked for years of making "one more strike."

"That's a deal for an ole cripple like that, Mac. I'll give ye fifteen for him."

"It's yours, Ike," said McDonald, wearily.

To his astonishment the old man counted out the money.

"Ain't going to start out sure enough, are you, Ike?" asked McDonald, incredulously.

"Reckon I air, Mac," cackled the old man, elated. "I'm a-goin' to find them three little hills of gold or bust a cinch, that's what."

"You've tried it time and time again," remonstrated the livery man, "as others have tried it before and after you."

"Know it, Mac, know it," said the old man, doggedly, "but I ain't been out thar for a long spell now—nigh seven years—and I got a new hunch—this time I'm a-goin' out past Coyote Wells, and then northeast like. Reckon I allus set too much store by what ole Peg-Leg tole me afore.

"I figgered he was mebbe tellin' me straight, 'cause he'd been drinkin', but I'll bet 'twouldn't assay ten per cent truth. Now I'm a-goin' a new way. I'm sure to strike sumthin', Mac—almost dead certain."

"But you ain't got no definite idear where it is, Ike?"

"I don't know eggzactly whar, but I got a mighty good idear and that's high enough for a feller to gamble."

"It'll take all the money you've got in the world—"

"That's nine dollars left of the twenty-four—then I got three saved up. If that ain't enough to stake an outfit what'll keep me in yere eye, Mac, Ole Ike's a tenderfoot."

"Ike's an old fool, if you want my opinion," said McDonald, bluntly, as he rose to go. "It's suicidal, I tell you."

The old man's gaze wandered wistfully back to the desert—he must get started before sundown. He ran in earnest and dried up the water-holes.

CHAPTER II.

NED ROYSE arrived in Campos with a cheap, shabby rig, a compound and cumulative hangover, and one bright purple kitten. This last was invisible to all save Royse, for he could not understand why the cat had tagged him all the way from the Grand Central station to this illustrious mountain town.

"Now be reasonable, cat, and don't start anything," he said gravely, as he got down from the automobile stage, but the purple feline merely curled its tail about his correctly puttied leg and promised nothing.

"What would people say? Well, he must make the best of it. He had thrown the phantom cat out the window of his Pullman dining-room at least a dozen times, but it invariably turned up at the next stop. He had been forced into grudging admiration for that cat's speed. Then, a new horror. He was terrified at the thought that cats bred with kittens could grow up and have a litter of kittens. Of course the phantom things would be of many colors; he would have to wear out the chalkboard.

In a manner of speaking, the young man was a broker. His father had left him his seat on the Stock Exchange, several millions, and membership in the old conservative firm of Waldow, Royse & Echeverry. He had always had a talent, amounting almost to genius, for the brokerage business, but he had had no confidence in himself. Therefore for months at a stretch this seemed to be Ned's sole ambition: then he would go upon one of his reckless and protracted sprees, and be astonishing.

"It seems to me, Ned, you inherited enough wild blood from your father to go into the family lot," Echeverry, the senior member, had said. The latter had the fondness for the young man's money sent him to "cures"s innumerable, where Ned fretted because he was unable, for the time being, to get drunk, and spent his days at the wineshops going on Broadway, likewise a few side streets.

Ned had returned from one of these sprees, packed him off to this dry town on the western edge of the Colorado desert.

"Emulate the ostrich, Ned," his partner had said, bidding him farewell. "Conquer this sponge part of your nature, somehow. I don't know what the trouble is, but there is something wrong with you."

Seated on the edge of the bed in a little high-ceiled room of the hotel, now, Royse pondered. His unshaven chin propped in his hands. He recalled their conversation quite clearly. Echeverry assured him he would attend to Ned's finances.

"Money!" He snarled the word, and went thru his pockets unsteadily. A trifle over five hundred dollars, bills and gold. He had often heard that much away at Canfield's between dinner and the opera in the old days.

Ah, ha! There was that purple cat dancing on the edge of the brown, earthenware water pitcher!

"Well, you young smart Aleck, I hope you fall in and drown—yes, drown in water—a horrible death—horrible, hor——"

Overcome by the gloom of the thought he forgot his malefic wish and wept a little.

He wanted a drink badly, but the flask in his bag was empty, and Gehenna could not have been drier than Campos that afternoon.

"Cat," he said confidingly, "I was a quixotic fool not to bring a trunkful."

"Why do you drink at all?" inquired the purple kitten, meditatively, stroking its whiskers with a deep-dyed paw.

Here was a pretty how-dee-do! The thing was talking! It had not done that before. He must be polite to it.

"I don't know, cat, I'm sure," he replied. "I don't know, but I'll give you five hundred dollars for a drink."

The beast was incorruptible. It dipped the tip of its tail in the water and proceeded to brush its teeth before replying. Then it spoke scornfully:

"No, not for five hundred mices. I want to know why you drink. If you don't tell me, I'll get you—so there!"

Ned shivered at this vague threat.

"Why do I drink?" he repeated. "Why do I—

But this took a long time, and he fell asleep somewhere between the ceiling and the floor. Ah, it was a "wild night on the sea!"

It was sundown when he awoke, his head throbbing, face flushed, and throat sanded with thirst. He looked about for the purple cat. It was not in the water pitcher, so he drained that in a breath. Making his way unsteadily to the veranda he sat down next to Old Ike.

The old man labored with the stub of his pencil and a dirty envelope, making a list of what he would need from the store.

"So that's the desert?" Royse spoke half to himself.

Old Ike looked at him over his steel-rimmed spectacles. The younger fellow's face wasn't bad. He was a hard drinker —he could see that. He looked not unlike—no, not often unlike—himself.

"That's her," said the old man. "Ain't she purty?"

It seemed to Ned as if some one other than himself spoke:

"Like a Remington background from here, all right, but I'll bet a dollar it's hotter and thirstier than h—l a few miles out."

"I say ye'll bet?" Old Ike was interested. "I tell ye, sonny, she's like a friend—the better ye know her and the closer ye get, the purtier she looks."

"You've been out there?" asked Royse. "More'n ten times this many," the old man replied briefly, looking up his blunted and gnarled fingers. "Civil enjineer, air ye?"

"No," said Royse, absently. "I collect cats—purple ones."

Old Ike did not know just what to make of this. He gave up trying to figure it.

"Thought mebbe from ye'r outfit ye might be. P'raps ye know sumthin' 'bout mines, too?"

"Yes, I studied mining engineering a little at college."

"Ye don't say so, now? Hum-n-n! Is that so? Hum-n-n!"

Old Ike intended to say something else, but he was busy again with the problem on the greasy envelope and had forgot, leaving Royse looking at the desert and the Vulture mountains.

The east wind was subsiding. The mountains to the west hid the sunset, but the crests were bathed in the infinite blue-gray of the distant desert to a faint purple. The color made Ned sick, and he shut his eyes.

Then the landlady came out and went thru a ceremony McDonald called, "Beatin' the gong." Presently a man pounding with a short bar on a triangular-shaped bar of steel suspended from a wire—a device of long ago—informed the ranchers for miles around that supper was ready. Sometimes they misunderstood and did not come in and the triangle never failed. Royse calculated that he was hungry. If only that thirst-accursed cat did not come in and play with his napkin, as it had in the dining car!

CHAPTER III.

IN THE dining-room, as she distributed the plated silver, the Indian girl who waited on the tables was thinking rebellious thoughts. Salida, granddaughter of old Quintiliano, last chief of the Coyotes, who had died the year before, was unhappy.

"It is all the fault of the Government school," she thought passionately. "What does all this mean to me? What? What? What? Twenty-two last fiesta, and still unmarried! Am I to live on here until I am old and wrinkled like my aunt? Am I——"

And then a surge of resentment swept her, resentment against the Government for educating her.

"The tribe!" Her rather wide but pretty red lips curved in scorn at the thought, and her mind raced on with her wrongs as she worked.

"The tribe—it means nothing to me now. They taught me to forget all that. Have I not been an apt pupil? A few miserable Cahuilla bucks scattered about in the brush on the reservation. I hate the word reservation—I hate it, hate it!"

One of the hats and three hundred and twenty acres of the land belonged to her, now that her parents and her grandfather were gone. She was content to rent this to one of her own people for what he could afford to pay—she never would go to live there.

She knew she could become the wife of one of those dirty, stolid, lazy men of her tribe, who lived precariously in strange contingual contrast between savagery and civilization. Her whole being revolted against that prospect. She had seen some of the girls who were with her at school settle down to that life, and, if fortunate in a husband, grow fat and frowsy, or, if not, lean, worn, and embittered with work and childbearing.

She had foreseen a different future for herself. Her teacher, a well-meaning young feminist, had inoculated her with the virus of discontent without giving her an antidote, nor had she told her a little knowledge was a dangerous thing, especially for a girl who lived on a reservation.

The dining-room had seemed a way out at first, and for a while she had been very happy serving the most awesome of freaks, the Great American Tourist, copying faithfully, patiently, the manners of her betters.

Night after night, before her mirror, her black hair, lovely for all its coarseness, had been combed and recombed after the fashion of the women tourists, until she had settled on the style of dressing it low, drawing the ends in a knot of the middle over her little ears, and gathered in a piquant chignon where the smooth skin of the back shaded from old copper to dark olive.

Five dollars a week and board was a great deal for a girl from that she had bought what she considered a fairly complete wardrobe. Her standard had been pieced together thru observation, helpful hints from the young ladies at the hotel, and reading the woman's magazines that came regularly, bearing the atmosphere of Fifth Avenue and Paris to this wilderness place.

She recalled now her trip to San Diego, where she purchased the three—no two tastefully made white shirtwaists and one lace waist——

"Wouldn't you like this lovely open-work? Robespierre collar—all hand-made. I think it's grand," the clerk had suggested.

Salida rejected it, not so much for sweet modesty's sake, as from the little hurt of realization that her dark skin would contrast poorly with it.

One black and one steel-gray skirt, ready-made and deftly refitted, a pair of two-button gloves, a pair of cheap, high black buttoned boots, several pairs of strong, serviceable stockings, but above all else, one set of real "foundations"—these should have been mentioned first.

There were two corsets, selected after extended consultation with the magazine expert of various forms and styles of confining the female form divine as an aid to beauty. She had preferred a style with blue ribbon, but it seemed wrong to pay "six bits" for this extravagance. As it was, the others cost $2.45 each. Some comfort in underwear prevailed in the selection of her lingerie. She was dressed like a lady; nice, she could tell by the looks, but not important to her, she felt like one until——

Ah, that cruel moment at the table last night! Salida thought hurt, and she dabbed her handkerchief to the back of her small, delicately formed hand where a hot crystal tear fell and glistened. "Isn't she pretty—a perfect Indian type," she had heard a man's voice say and then—God, how could any one be so civilized and so brutal?—"a pretty enough if her skin wasn't that ugly copper. She's probably dirty—they're all alike—but will wrinkle up by the time they're 30—'la femme rouge'!"

This last sounded the worst insult of all—it was a woman's voice. Salida's only recollection of the woman was of eyebrows arched in what seemed a permanent supercilliousness. What was the girl's work was over she had cried herself to sleep.

Her race had been well trained. The Government school had done its best—or worst. It had taught the ways of people who were not her people; it had striven in every way to uproot the old influences, prejudices, traditions, but had not raised a subtle barrier beyond which she felt she could not pass. Once she had thought of Carlisle, and for some months attempted the sale of her ranch. Now this was out of the question.

"It is no use," she said despairingly.

"The more I am educated the unhappier I shall be."

In the pantry leading from the kitchen she looked a moment in a mirror.

"If I were not an Indian I would be beautiful," she thought defiantly.

Then she dried her eyes, wondering if that woman had thought an Indian woman could not cry.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT'S the matter? Royse addressed the old man, who looked up from the envelope now covered on both sides with crabbed hieroglyphs, a piteous look in his faded blue eyes. They were alone in a corner of the dining-room.

"'Twon't come out right," quavered Old Ike. "Thar ain't enough—I can't go."

"What do you drink for, then?" asked the cat.

Then, remembering he was talking to a stranger: "Ye see, I was a-figgerin' on an outfit," he explained bashfully. Perhaps this young man would think him crazy for talking prospecting at his age. 'Wanted to make just one more trip out yonder."

The young man did not laugh—he spoke seriously.

"You were going prospecting. May I ask how much you need?"

"Wal, 'bout six dollars would turn the trick."

The old man went over his items eagerly.

"I'm only takin' one blanket, 'cause it's warm out thar, now. Them desert water bags is what did the mischief—they come high. Mebbe I could get along with two, but that don't help much, and I don't like to risk it—can't stand the heat without water the way I used to.

"I can get an ole pick and shovel from the blacksmith for a dollar and a half—the handles is busted, but they'll do me. And I've got a burro—got him for a song. Oughter have a sack of flapjack flower, some canned goods, bacon, coffee, sugar, salt—mebbe I can leave out the bacon if I've plenty of salt horse—and I'll want a good knife, one of them little skillets and a canteen—and let me see—oh, yes, high shoes. Them sidewinders out thar bite right thru ordinary leather."

Royse had an inspiration—he would fool that cat.

"When do you start?"

Old Ike looked about cautiously.

"Calculated to get out some time afore sundown tomorrow. Wouldn't want ye to say nothin' 'bout it to the folks 'round thar next to whar the livery barn is. Campos were on the Yuma stage line. One night he tole me just 'bout whar it were—he'd found it one afternoon. He fooled 'round out thar till he got out of water, and he was headin' for Coyote Wells when he came to this little pile of black rock.

"The desert's full of 'em—rocks like that—and, well, air, right in the center of this he found what's called a little 'blow.' Thar was three little beads—conelike—that didn't look just like rock, and he scraped a piece of that with his knife. It was the ole yaller metal, purty nigh pure!

"Course he couldn't wait 'round—he was 'bout out of water then, and sumthin' like a day and a half from the Wells—so he took what samples he could pack and hiked. Got lost comin' in, and just reached water alive. I've heard tell that the Indians hereabouts know the place, but I don't believe it. They'd 'a' staked out long ago.

"Wal, Peg-Leg was allus getting ready to go back thar. He did start once, but 'twa'n't but he got off the track both times. Tole me he knew what he'd made his mistakes, but he died afore he could find it. Married a squaw. Peg-Leg did. They made a funny couple—she with her blanket and he with his wooden leg.

"Sumthin' tells me I can find this, sonny—got a feeling I'll make one more strike—and a big one. Pa'low I've made lots of little ones in my day."

The old man's eyes were shining. The ignis fatuus that had dominated his whole life danced before them again. No lusting leaves its taint in the blood more incurably than the lust for gold. It is the more insidious because combining the attraction of the wildly romantic and the intensely practical. Only death effects a lasting cure—and—well, who knows?—there are strange tales told of gold hunters' ghosts.

Something of this was in Ned's mind as he listened. He had noticed abstractedly the Indian girl waiting upon the table. Now, as she cleared the dishes from his place, he was struck by the beauty of her little dark hand and arm.

"Apple pie, ice cream, or steamed pudding?"

It was a decidedly sweet voice—he fancied he caught a little forlorn note of hopelessness. He looked up and saw a faraway look in her eyes. Her features were unusually regular and delicate, as Indian beauty goes. He noted the becomingness of her freshly laundered white shirtwaist and the black skirt that made her lithe young figure seem more slender.

"Apple pie, please," he said.

"Do you want it stage-driver?" He thought her voice held a hint of tears.

"Do I want it what?"

"With ice cream on it?"

Suddenly Salida looked directly into his eyes. They were nice, kindly gray eyes—a little puffy underneath—but she thought there was something of real friendliness in them. As for Royse—for his life he could not have told why—his mind flashed back to a performance of "The Squaw Man."

"Yes," he smiled, "I'll have it stage-driver."

Salida thought of the smile all the way to the kitchen. Somehow it cheered her.

"We'll need another burro and three or four more water bags," he heard the eager old voice saying. "I'll start 'bout twice as much water as me."

Hitherto nothing had seemed real to Royse—he had felt a casual spectator of the impressions his deadened consciousness received. He had comprehended the old man's deadly earnestness. He was staking all he had and his little remaining life on this wild venture.

"Will fifty dollars start us off?" Ned asked.

"Fifty dollars!" The old timer's voice shook with joy. "Why, that'll keep us on the desert two months, if we can get water—water—that's whar the thirst scratches, Buddy. But we'll do it—I feel it in my ole bones. We air a-goin' to find the ole Peg-Leg mine, sartain."

Salida, returning with the delicacy known as "stage-driver," heard this, and a little later was quietly impelled her to the most momentous act of her young life.

CHAPTER V.

JUST ye leave it all to me, Buddy," commanded Old Ike. "I'll have everything ready. We can start out when it starts to get cool—'long 'bout 4 o'clock, p'reckon. Ye better git a little out-fit by that grove of blue gum trees down the road yonder. It's only an hour, or two at most, to the desert from thar."

There was a world of caution in the old prospector's tones, altho they were alone on the veranda.

"'Twon't do for us to be seen together," he continued. "They know me, and 'know I've sumthin', and if they think ye're a mining man like I did, they'll put them facts together and figger out what we're up to. Then there'll be a stampede, and there won't nobody get nothin'. Leave all the stuff to me. All you need to buy is some easy high shoes to keep ye from gettin' snake-bit.

"I'll be a-goin' to my cabin now and get a good sleep. We can go on till

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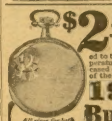

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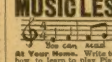
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midnight tomorrow night. That'll bring us to a little water-hole out thar. Then, in the mornin', we can start our real dash for the gold pole. Just think, what all that money'll buy, Buddy, just think!"

"Yes," said Royse, dully, "a million quarts of champagne, perhaps."

"Ah! the fine water you'll ever want to drink, Buddy," the old man said pityingly, as he turned away. "Mebbe you'd better drink all the water you can hold tonight and tomorrow—just make yer self sick of it, and you won't miss it so much if we get short. Yeal, good night, Buddy."

"Good night, Old Timer."

Lighting a mild cigar, Ned watched the almost full moon climb up out of the desert. There came a breath of cool air from the west, fraught with the freshness of the sea. He found the incense of the blossoming orange trees peculiarly soothing—frequently he came with bachelors.

Tilting back in his chair he regarded the heavens. There was the Pleiades—that purple-hued beastie had not made him forget his astronomy. He recalled the loveliness and grace of Spider's figures personifying this constellation. He smiled as he remembered how he had fallen in love with one of these dark-eyed star maidens.

Where had he? The eyes of the little Indian girl tonight—was it that? The desert was a crepuscular stretch of unearthly blue. He caught the sheen of the moon a moment in the bosom of the Salton Sea many miles away.

"Please, may I talk with you a little while?" said a voice at his elbow.

Roused from his reverie he saw the Indian girl standing there, a mantilla about her shoulders. She was on his feet, rap in hand, but not astonished, for some reason.

"Certainly, please do. Won't you take this chair?" He spoke the conventional phrases automatically.

"This will do," she replied. "I do not know what you will think, but I thought I could talk with you." Her articulation was so perfect that it marred the music of her voice for Ned. "There is something I do not understand, and it has made me—unhappy."

"Yes?" said Ned. "Yes?"

He could say nothing else. To his credit it may be said he thought none of the things he would were this happening in New York.

"You come from the East, from a city there." She weighed her words, determined it should all be impeccably good English. "You know the people and how they live? You know what makes a lady? You know that, don't you?"

"Sorry to disappoint you, but can't say I do," he answered, cynically.

He saw a look of hurt wonderment in the dark eyes that appealed trustingly.

"I didn't mean that," he corrected. "Of course I do."

Straightway his mind eliminated all the "ladies" he had known saving his mother and his first sweetheart. And when he spoke he was conscious that oddly enough, for him, he was giving a very excellent imitation of others.

"I think," said he, throwing away the cigar, "that a lady should have delicacy and refinement in all things, absence of which no amount of culture, education, nor social position can compensate for. A real lady is honest and true—but first of all kind."

"You tell me what you really think? I want to know."

"Yes," he spoke with sudden conviction, "that is what I really think."

"Now, please do not laugh at me. But I do not think you will—you seem very kind. Is there any reason why an Indian girl, like me, for instance, cannot be a real lady?"

"None whatever!" he replied promptly. As a matter of fact I think she has a better chance than most others.

"Oh, why?"

Royse felt distinctly that he was repeating some unseen prompter's words.

"She is more natural to begin with. I don't know much about her training or environment. My impression is that with the girl in the city does not always help her to be a real lady." He fervently wished he could remember some college lectures—anything that would be relevant. "But after all," he told himself, "she is a woman, a common sense, and I'm bankrupt on that."

She told her story, simply, directly. Women had told him things before, but not in such a way that he usually held their hands while they did it. He felt differently now.

"Oh, why is it that the Government educates and trains us to live like your people when they will not let us?" she cried appealingly. "Why do they try to make us forget all the old things—the customs and habits and even the songs of our people, and give us in return things we cannot use?"

"They teach us to cook. I cooked for my grandfather when I was 7 years old. I could make bread from acorns. I could not make a pie. My grandfather did not want a pie. She ate fiesta he ate some, and it made him very sick. He liked simple things. He ate bread and meat and drank water. But I could make wine from berries and grapes.

"They teach us music. That is not bad, but they tell us our songs are not music. They teach us to wear clothes like your people do. That does not hurt us, but it does not make us happy. Many times they teach us are good, but still we are Indians. My grandfather was a chief. He had been to Washington and he knew about politics. He could not vote. Here other women vote. I cannot vote. I am an Indian!"

"That's a d—d shame!" muttered Royse, clenching his hands.

"They taught me to like books and read poetry, and they expect me to marry a man who will not even read the newspapers, and who has no ambition except to live with as little work as possible. Maybe they do not care whether I marry any one. Yes, I think they would be glad—I think they want the Indians to die out."

She paused, abashed at her words. Down the grade toward the desert she heard a coyote bark, and then the yapping of his mate. It stirred some primal instinct within her. Why had she spoken so to this stranger of another race? Then the recollection of his smile assured her.

"I think I understand," said Royse, sympathetically. "Have you ever thought of going to college?"

"Yes, I have thought," she replied hopelessly, "but it would do no good. It seems the more we learn the more likely to be unhappy for. If I became very wise people might be kind to me, but they would not believe I was an Indian.

"Last night at the dinner table a man said something about me. There was a woman with him. She looked like a lady. And she said I was an ugly copper color—she said I was probably dirty—that we all looked alike. That is a lie. Every morning since I can remember, until I came here, I have bathed in the creek that runs down the canyon.

"She said I would be 30 and fat and wrinkled. My mother did not have wrinkles until she was 40, and she worked very hard. She did grow fat, but she did not have a corset. But perhaps —maybe— I should not speak of such things to you?"

She questioned anxiously.

"Speak of anything you like," responded Ned. For the moment he had forgotten his unslaked torment of Tantalus.

The girl's voice quivered as she resumed:

"This woman said something I do not understand—I remember how she said it —'a fam roose.' Was she calling me names? Please tell me. It sounded wicked."

He hesitated.

"Oh, you need not be afraid to tell me!" she urged. "I have heard men swear."

"It is not bad, but just unkind, perhaps," he smiled. "It means 'the red woman.'"

"The red woman," she repeated.

"I would consider it a compliment if I were you," Ned counseled.

Salida had a sudden savage desire to scratch this woman's face. There was a great bitterness in her heart.

"That is it—I shall always be just a 'red woman.' If I could change my skin like the snake I could be a lady. Those people thought I could not understand English, just because I spoke of me as they would an animal. Everybody expects us to be like animals, and if we try to be something else it is a wonderful thing, but still we are animals."

"A great many of your people marry with my people out here, don't they?" he asked.

She looked at him quickly.

"That is true. The women do. The men do not."

Better than expatriation this told Royse the true state of affairs.

"Can I," he asked himself, "honestly tell her the old life was happier, the old things best?"

"Are you—may I ask if you come here for health?" she inquired.

"No—a little for pleasure. I'm a drunkard," he finished gravely.

"A drunkard?" She regarded him with a puzzled look.

"Yes; it's all very silly, my running about trying to get away from something that I'm afraid of. I'm afraid that if I can't control my appetite for boo—for —ah—liquor, not even your climate will help. I'm afraid it will get me."

"But why do you? I think that is important to find out. Surely you care whether you are drunkard or not?"

"My cat tells you to ask me——" Ned demanded, then stopped stupidly. It was absurd: of course she had not seen the cat.

"No one told me to ask," she said gently. "I thought I might help if I knew. You've let me tell you my troubles."

"That's all right—I was thinking of something else," he apologized. "Yes, it is important to find out why. I guess I do not care."

"You don't care?" she echoed. "Don't you care about life, about money, or working, or anything?" she asked.

"There isn't any family. I do not care about working, but I do care about money. Real estate, I'd like money best, but I have always had enough so that I did not have to care more about money than to spend it. Yes, but it seems I live more when I drink."

"I don't know very much, but it seems to me you will have a very long nor so well. Then how could you live more?"

"I'll give it up, but it seems that way. I guess the trouble is I do not care enough about any one thing, except drinking."

"Aren't there—I've read of places where you could be cured. Could you not go to one?"

"Been to 'em all," he said grimly. "Nothing will cure a man who doesn't want to be cured, who won't go halfway. All the time I'm in 'em I'm cursing them, giving me chloride of gold, then apamorphine, and telling me it was the gold cure I made me vomit. Now, please, let's not talk about me any more. Let's talk about you. Were you going to ask me anything?"

"Yes, I was going to ask if you know of something I can do, some place I can go, where I shall be treated like a human being? Once I saw a coyote in a cage—I do not want to be like that."

To Royse came understanding of a problem that had presented itself and received consideration hitherto only in a desultory way.

"I am afraid you will find almost everywhere that men will remember first of all that you are a woman," he said slowly. "You may find some who will forget you are a red woman, but they will never forget you are a woman, nor let you forget it. They may treat you like a human being, but all the time they will be conscious of the fact that you are a woman first of all."

"If I had a great deal of money would it help?"

"It might, but I doubt it—probably make matters worse. It hindered me. It's the curse of my curse. Well, that's neither here nor there. After all, it's just living that counts. A lot of old thing, as you said they're some ages back, and every once in a while somebody believes it and uses it in a speech without the slightest meaning.

"Nearly everybody misunderstands it—this saying. No matter what you are doing, you live every moment to its uttermost and best. Be natural, simple and sincere—be yourself. You'll get as much, or more, out of life on the reservation as you will out of it in New York or anywhere else—if you want to."

He broke off with a cynical chuckle. Here was a paradox. Ned Royse, hedonist, preaching to a wise virgin of the wilderness.

"A prophet is not without honor," he mused aloud.

"I don't understand," she said.

"It just occurred to me as odd that a man who has lived as I have should say that to a woman who has lived as you have."

Woman! He had called her a woman! Salida seemed to herself still a little girl, altho she knew she had crossed the line from girlhood to the nobility of womanhood. But this was the first time any one had publicly acknowledged it. She felt that perhaps she had been childishly voicing her plaint. Then she found her voice again.

"But it's true just the same, is it not—what you said?"

"Yes, it's true: but the best teachers don't preach—they practice. I—I want to help you some way, if I may. Don't know just how. Maybe I can think of a way when I'm—when my head clears."

"Thank you very much—you have seemed to me like a friend."

"I want to be," he said. "I shall try to prove one."

She stood up and slowly put out a little dark red paw. This had been an experience she would never forget. Then her artificial training asserting itself spoiled it all, but remembered with shame that in civilization people are introduced to one another. This grave social error filled her with confusion.

Well, it was too late to be formal now —formal! What a grand, imposing word that was! And so she said, "Shake!" as she had heard one white man say to another.

Royse stood there holding the warm, soft little hand firmly. Good Lord! What with that and the moonlight——

She drew back her hand somewhat reluctantly. It was pleasant to have him hold it. She could remember no feeling just like it.

But there flashed a subtle warning that it was a prelude to something more dangerously pleasant. Her Spartan training had taught her to fear the frankly pleasant.

"I am Salida," she said, as formally as a girl could in introducing herself to a man who had been holding her hand.

"Salida," he smiled down at her. "Red Royse. You are Salida—what? Will you tell me your other name?"

"Just Salida," she spoke with dignity she hoped would atone for her previous neglect of punctilio. "Salida of the Los Coyotes—in fam roose."

"Don't call yourself that!"

"I am proud of it," she retorted, fighting a lump in her little throat. "I am glad I am a Los Coyote. I shall not try to be anything else. I shall try to be just myself. Thank you."

She walked away rapidly. She knew she should have said "buenas noches," or "good night," or something, but tears, for she knew not what, would have betrayed her. In her room she wrote a note to her employer. It was very correct as to grammar, spelling, and punctuation, the same as is taught in our best colleges. She read it thru.

"Dear Mrs. Briggs: I cannot wait on the tables any more, because I

(Continued on Page 19)

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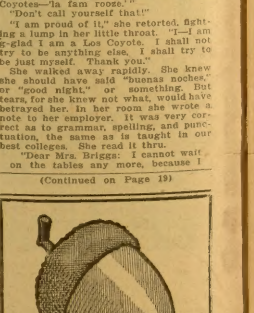

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CHAPTER X.

THE GIRL IN THE GARDEN.

THE next morning Billy sat in his little cell, his head in his hands, trying to figure out some way to find the shows and get back to them. Rapidly he went over the events of the past few days. He recalled every detail that he could of the plot of Marshall and Moran to steal the show, and examined the way it had worked out, from the time little Tim Marshall had rushed into the saloon with the news that Sampson was dead, until the moment he had felt the blow on his head and had sunk in a stupor upon the floor of his car.

He felt sure that by this time McCoy was with the show. In all probability, he thought, McCoy had been driving it for days, waiting for the word to come over from Moran. If McCoy had arrived, Billy knew that it was only a question of hours when the show would get out of the State. This he had to circumvent if he hoped to win in the battle against the thieves. The question was how to get back to the show before they crossed the State line. But which direction were they moving it? What State did they intend taking it into?

The more he thought over it, the more difficult it appeared to solve, the deeper he seemed to be involved. He saw no chance now to get out of the jail. In the first place, it was too solidly constructed to break out of. In the second place, he felt that he had been too kind to him for him to return the kindness with ingratitude.

He began to figure on the possibility of getting bond, but quickly gave that up when he reflected that even if the judge allowed him to give bond, there was no one in that section of the country who would sign a bond for him. Bitterly he reflected that country people look upon all showmen as grafters of the worst type.

He rose from his couch and paced backward and forward the length of his tiny cell. After a while he went to the little window that looked out on the garden behind the jail, where he had seen the flowers.

"Well at least make things seem a bit brighter," he said bitterly.

He was surprised to see a young girl, radiant as the flowers about her, walking among the bushes, picking the open buds and adding them to the great bunch of roses she carried in her arms. She was singing softly to herself in a sweet contralto voice, and Billy stood quietly listening to her, struck by the beauty and freshness of her girlish face and bearing.

As she drew close to Billy's window, she looked up suddenly and flushed as she saw the young man's eyes following her.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, startled. "I didn't know any one was watching me."

"I haven't been watching long," replied Billy, "only to see if there was any one out there." As the girl started to move away, he added, "Please don't let me interrupt you. I just like to look at the flowers. It isn't very attractive in here."

"How long have you been there?" she asked, with an embarrassing little flush.

"I came yesterday morning," said Billy, with a smile. "I haven't decided yet how long I'll stay."

"I hope not for long," she replied. After that she was silent for a while, as she continued to pick her roses. When she spoke again she asked, "Do you like flowers?"

"I love them," said Billy. "Would it be asking too much if you could leave me a rose or two when you go? It would help to brighten the room."

"I always put roses in the rooms when anybody is in them," she replied. "That is, if they want me to. Some of the people who come here don't appear to care much for flowers."

"That's kind of you," said Billy. "I will appreciate it."

He contigued to watch her as she moved lightly from bush to bush. She seemed to him to be very beautiful and sweet, and he felt a distinct annoyance that she should see him behind prison bars. After a while he asked her, "Are you the sheriff's daughter?"

"Why, no," she smiled at him. "I'm Judge Poole's daughter. My father is the circuit judge."

"Oh," said Billy, "then your father will decide finally what is to become of me."

"Yes; I suppose so," she agreed.

"I hope he isn't a hard man," said Billy. "He's the sweetest, gentlest old man in the world," said the girl loyally. "It hurts him when he has to send any one to jail than it does the man, I sometimes think."

Billy relapsed into silence, while his mind grew busy with a new scheme which had just occurred to him. This kind-hearted girl would surely listen to his story and let him out for a few days. He determined to try to see the judge.

"Do you think your father will see me, if he thought I was innocent of the crime I'm accused of?" asked Billy.

"I'm afraid not," she said. "He isn't very busy these days, and I'm sure he'd do anything he could for you, especially if I asked him to," she added shyly.

Without further ado, Billy began to tell the girl in the garden the story of his arrest and the subsequent happenings. As he warmed to his subject she stopped picking flowers and came over to his window and stood under it.

She remembered the Five United Shows quite well. She and her father had gone together to see the circus last season on a Saturday afternoon, and went to the judge by Morgan. When Billy finished, she said that she would see her father at once, and get him to walk past the jail that afternoon. Promising to bring him as quickly as possible, the girl turned away down the walk and out thru the little gate at the back, turning to wave at the young man as she disappeared into the hedge which surrounded the garden.

That afternoon she returned with her father, a kindly-faced, white-haired old gentleman, who wore a long linen duster over his baggy black trousers, a red bandanna handkerchief around his neck, and a broad brimmed felt hat of long curly hair. They came in thru the garden gate, and the old gentleman nodded cordially to Billy as he was admitted to jail office. The sound of his rumbling voice, talking with the little sheriff, came thru the window to Billy's cell.

In a few minutes the little sheriff came into the room and told Billy that the judge would see him in the garden. When Billy came into the office, the old judge turned without a word and led the way out into the garden. He sat down on a bench and motioned Billy to a seat beside him. The girl gathered her feet under her and sat on the grass, pretending intently to the conversation of the two men.

"My little gal here says you're a circus man, son," said the judge, by way of opening the conversation. Billy nodded, and the judge continued: "She seems powerfully fixed up about your being here. Says you ain't been treated right. I was jest in char askin' the sheriff what he thought about it. Now, you tell me your story, and we'll see what we can do."

Thus encouraged, Billy launched into the story of his fight with Marshall and Moran, the murder of Sampson, the accusation against Morgan, and the manager's incarceration in the jail at Benton Harbor. The judge listened, with his eyes closed, occasionally wagging his head from side to side. When Billy finished he said:

"Well, sir, you circus people sho' do have hard times, that's you'r."

"It's all in the game," said Billy. "I guess that's what makes it interesting to us."

The old judge rose and held out his hand. "Well, sonny, I'll see what I can do for you. If there's any way out of this I'm willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. I'll see you, maybe, this evening."

So saying, he helped his daughter to her feet, and together, their arms around each other's shoulders, they walked down the little walk and out of the gate in the hedge.

Late that afternoon Billy, watching by his window, saw the old judge enter the gate again and come slowly up the walk. He stopped at Billy's window and took a yellow telegram from his coat pocket. After putting on his steel-rimmed spectacles and looking at Billy for a moment over them, he proceeded to read it carefully. After that he took off his spectacles, put them in their rusty case, returned the telegram to his pocket, and looked whimsically up at the anxious face of the young man.

"I just got a message from Benton Harbor," he said leisurely. "It's from the police cote judge. He says Morgan was arrested jest as you say for the murder of Sampson. The other details are jest as you said. I also found out where the show was playing. It's at Williamstown, and the message says a man named Moran is the manager."

"That's it," gasped Billy, delightedly. "I told you that."

The old judge smiled at Billy's excitement and went on speaking. "After hearing the matter over with my daughter, I've decided, on her recommendation, to let you out on your own recognizance upon your promise to return here for trial the eighth day of September, to answer to the charge which is made against you. That is, of course, unless the case is dismissed befo' that time."

"I hardly dared hope that much, Judge," said Billy gratefully. "You may rest perfectly secure that I will be there."

"Furthermore," went on the old gentleman, "I've decided that my daughter and I are going to take you for a most pleasant evening at the circus last season, so I'm going to ask you to accept a little token from me, and here from me. You're certainly welcome to it."

He took a bill from his wallet and handed it thru the bars to Billy. The young man took it, with gratitude shining in his happy face. "But the judge would listen to no thanks.

"I haven't got time to listen to thanks, right now," he said. "I'll jest step in fer a moment and see the sheriff."

He went into the sheriff's office, whence he emerged a few moments later, went slowly down the walk, and climbed into his buggy, which he had left waiting outside. Billy shouted after him:

"Thank you again, Judge. I'll see you before long under happier circumstances." But the judge appeared not to hear him, and a few minutes later the buggy was swallowed up in the dusk.

Later Billy walked from the jail a free man again. Quickly he planned carefully what he was going to do. The first thing was to get into communication with Morgan.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW EVIDENCE.

IT WAS dark when Billy stepped from the little frame house and hurried at once to the county jail where Morgan was confined. After a short conversation with the sheriff, he was allowed to see the prisoner, who came to the office slightly paler and more nervous than usual, but unexcorcerated, but otherwise in excellent health and humor.

The men clasped hands warmly, and Billy outlined his suspicions of Moran's theft of the show and his intention to hand it over to McCoy. He asked Morgan for a pencil and asked for some suggestion for regaining possession of the show from Moran.

"We must think about that until I get out," said Morgan. "This little talk with you has opened my eyes to a number of things I have never seen before."

"You've got to get out at once and go with me to get back the show," said Billy. "I've been away from it out of the State with it we'll have an awful time getting it back."

"There's just one thing between me and freedom," said Morgan. "I understand a negro boy in this town has the evidence that will clear me. But we can't find that boy. He believes that he says anything he'll be arrested, and every negro in this town is scared to death to say a word."

"Have you had a detective on his track?" asked Billy.

"Sure. But he hasn't found him yet. If we do find him, there won't be much trouble getting bail, my lawyer tells me. I've told the exact truth in this whole affair, and I'm going to stick to the truth to pull me thru."

"Well, what is the truth, Morgan?"

Morgan looked up and sly. "What do you mean? Do you think I'm a murderer?"

"I'm not thinking anything," said Billy. "I want to know everything you

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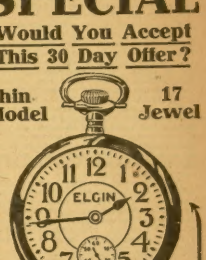

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know about this case, and then I'm going out and find that negro boy."

"Well," said Morgan, "the truth is, I know just about as little about the killing as you do. Sampson had been my treasurer for three years, as you know, and we always got on well together. He got a good salary, and was always satisfied. The night of the killing he and I had supper together at a restaurant, and then walked down to the tiedup wagon where Sampson was opening a new set of books. He'd been working on them at night, so as to get them all ready for the opening of the season.

"We sat there for a few minutes, and Sampson took out an old pistol of mine that I had left under the counter. We always keep a pistol or two around the ticket wagon, so as to be ready in case of a hold-up. The pistol had my name engraved on a silver plate fastened into the handle of it.

"Sampson put the pistol on a table in front of him, and took his own gun down from a rack above the counter. He said he had a cleaning kit in his room at the hotel, and that he would take both guns up with him that night and clean them. I then arose to go back to the hotel, where I had some letters to write.

"Now, here's where the negro boy comes in. As I stepped to the ground from the back of the wagon, a young negro boy got up from the ground under the wagon and ran off. I don't know why he was under the wagon, unless he thought we had some money out there, or was looking for a chance to steal something. Whoever that boy was, however, he has kept his mouth closed, except to hint that he knew all about the murder. We haven't been able to get a trace of him. I believe we'd find that boy Billy, I'm a dead man."

"Is that all you know about it?" asked Billy, as Morgan finished his narration.

"Everything," Morgan replied. "I went to the hotel and got down to work. After a while somebody knocked at my door, and when I went, there stood the sheriff. He had just come from the scene of the killing. He said my pistol had been found there, recently discharged. The smell of burned powder was still fresh in it. I went down to the jail with him, of course, and the next day was bound over to the grand jury on a charge of murder. That's the whole story, Billy. The negro boy is my only hope. He knows whether Sampson was killed by some one, or whether he killed himself, and he's got to talk."

It was nearly midnight when Billy's ended what had been several hours of a fruitless search for the negro boy. The negroes in their section of the town swore they knew nothing of him. Downcast and almost disheartened, Billy went to the little saloon where he had first met Marshall and Morgan. He wanted to think the matter over.

The same negro waited on him as before, and he grinned broadly as he recognized Billy as a circus man.

"Y-an-a, suh, boss. Sam's still heah, suh. What's yo' gwine ter hab ternight, suh?"

Billy gave his order, and the boy returned with it in a few moments and stood respectfully by as Billy buried his nose in the cool glass of beer.

"Is de succus comin' back, boss?" asked the negro, as Billy raised his face and put down his glass.

"Not this year. Why? Didn't the pass I gave you work?"

"Y-as-a, suh. Hit wukked all right. Dat's why I axed yo' suh. I thought, maybe, if de succus wus comin' back, yo' might hab another pass."

Billy smiled as the negro broke into a loud guffaw. Suddenly an idea struck the circus man.

"Sam," he said, "do you remember those two men who were here with me the night Mr. Sampson was shot?"

The negro porter turned ash gray, and started to move away. Billy stopped him, holding out a dollar bill, as he continued: "Well, I've got reason to believe that the little fellow knows more about the killing of Mr. Sampson than he's letting on. I believe he did the shooting himself, and he's trying to let Morgan get the blame."

The negro had edged nearer as Billy showed that he held no suspicion that he was connected with the case, and was intensely interested in what the young man was saying.

"There's a negro boy in this town knows all about it, Sam. He was near the wagon the night of the shooting, and maybe saw the fighting. I want you to help me find that boy."

The negro was silent and seemed to be thinking. Presently tentatively peeled off a five-dollar bill from the roll Morgan had given him at the jail, and held it out to the boy. The sight sent the negro's eyes bulging with pleasure.

"Boss, is dey 'spectin' that nigger ob shootin' Mr. Sampson?"

"Nothing like that at all," Billy assured him. "If you find the boy for me, I'll protect him."

"Well, suh, to tell yo' de trut, I spec' I knows whar dat nigger can be foun', suh. He's mighty low, tho, 'case he's feared de white folks'll git 'im, ef dey finds he wus down dar."

Billy refused to reassure the negro that they all felt sure the boy had nothing to do with the murder. They only wanted him as a witness, not to charge Morgan of the charge against him. When the five-dollar bill in Billy's hand was exchanged for a eighty-cent, and a two-dollar note, Sam's memory came back to him in a rush.

"Boss," he said, "yo' jes' wait fo' me twill dey closes de bar, en I'll take yo' right whar dat nigger is."

With this reassuring pat on funny capers in his throat, Billy went to the corner and waited in the shadow of a tree. In a few minutes Sam appeared out of the door and looked around for him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEGRO'S STORY.

BILLY followed the negro porter quickly down the main street of the little town for two or three blocks, and then they turned into a winding road to the bor, where the negroes lived, in little side streets. The night was black, but the sky overhead, as it has a way to, relived its stars from a lavish hand, so thickly were they scattered. The lights in the harbor reflected dimly from the boats on which they rode rose and fell with the waves. Far out could be seen the lights of a steamer, continuously as they floated on the water. The smell of the ocean hung heavy in the atmosphere, somewhere in the distance a negro was playing a banjo and singing tunefully.

A short distance from the water's edge, the negro turned into a little side street, which dipped down into the blackness. As they passed thru it, Billy saw the shadowy little huts with which it was lined on both sides. Everything was still and quiet.

The negro guide turned once and grinned at Billy. "Don't scared, boss. Ain't nuthin' gwine ter hurt yo'."

"That's all right," Billy replied. "You lead on; I'll follow."

"Some white folks gits scared down heah in de night time. That's cause dey don't know de niggers. Dey don't a nigger down heah what would hurt a hair o' yo' haid, lessen dey got scared o' yo' or somp'n like dat."

Billy laughed. "All I want is the boy who was under that ticket wagon, and if I get him, I'll be your friend for life."

They stopped suddenly at a tiny hut which lay half concealed in a sandy hole above the level of the street. The negro ran down to its front door, threatening to roll in if the door was opened. A dim light shone in the crack under the door, but the windows had been covered with pieces of old cloth, so that the light showed only in spots where the cloth was torn, and around the edge where it dropped away from the wood casing. Billy's heart beat sharply, grinning at Billy as he finished.

"I had ter do dat, boss, or de nigger hidin' in dis house would a bin' mos' scared ter dest."

There was a moment's indecision, then the sound of a shuffling foot behind the door, and the portal was opened about an inch. The crack showed the frightened, wrinkled face of an old negro woman, who peered into the darkness out of a pair of watery, pin-point eyes. As her eyes slowly became accustomed to the darkness, she opened the door a little more, so that Billy got a better view of her. She was a tiny woman, her head was covered with a red bandanna handkerchief, and from her thick, black lips hung a long pipe, the strong, rank smell of odor made the fresh smell from the ocean fly in terror.

"What is it?" she muttered, trying to make out who stood before her hut.

"It's me, mammy," said the negro guide, pushing the door wider, and beckoning Billy to enter. "I got a white genernan heah what wants to see Jeff."

"Jeff ain't heah," she replied, with a note of fright in her voice. She looked at Billy suspiciously.

"Yes'm, he is, too," said Sam. "This heah genernan is gwine ter hep him. He ain't no detecker."

The old woman stepped back, and the two visitors walked into the little room which was bedroom, kitchen, dining-room and reception-room combined. The old woman looked Billy over carefully, and apparently satisfied with her scrutiny, betook herself to the high-backed rocker in the chimney corner, and lost herself in her pipe and catnaps.

"Come heah, Jeff," said Sam, to no one in particuler.

There was a moment's silence, then a woolly head appeared from beneath a pile of bedclothing in a corner, and a lean, frightened young negro boy emerged to view.

"What heah generman wants yo', Jeff," said Sam. "He wants yo' ter tell 'im somefin'. He ain't a-gwine ter hurt yo'. He's a-gwine ter hep yo' if yo' tells him all dot yo' done tole me 'bout what happen dat night."

The boy shifted his eyes to the floor and back again to Billy's face. Seeing there was no way out of it, he began to tell his story.

"I wuz a-lyin' out dar, boss, sleepin' under de wagon, when I heard dem two genermen, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Sampson, open de do' an' go inside. Dey wus a-talkin' bout de succus en one thing en yer, en en it wus feared dey'd see me sleepin' under dar, I laid clos' en kep' still. After a while Mr. Morgan say somefin' 'bout he's gwine back ter de hotel, en Mr. Sampson he say he gwine stay dar in de wagon an clean some pistols.

"Well, suh, after Mr. Morgan come outen de do', en des ez he come, I 'lowed he seed me, en I jump up an'run. He hollers after me, but I kep' on, 'cause I ain't pay 'im no min'. Den he holler again: 'What yo' gwine?' But I ain't go nuthin' ter say, en I kep' on runnin'.

"When I wus 'bout a block away I seen he wasn't comin', so I stopped en turned back ter de wagon.

"Wen I see'd he done gon' erway, I come on back ter de wagon. Jes' fo' I gits ter de corner o' de cross-cut de street, I seen a little man come out en walk towards de wagon. So I crep' up en peeked 'round de corner, en de little man wid de brown cloes talkin' ter Mr. Sampson. Mr. Sampson wuz cleanin' his pistol. He stopped when he'd hit, en laid it down on de table 'sides anef one.

"Dey soon dem air two genermans 'gin to quorl twixt deyse'fs 'bout a job er somepin'. De little man say he gwine ter pay Mr. Sampson sumpin, an' he don't know nuthin' 'bout Moran en don't care nuthin', 'case he's wukkin' fo' Morgan.

"Den de little man up en axed Mr. Sampson, ef he gwine ter git dat job sellin' tickets en Mr. Sampson say, Mr. Sampson he jes' laffed, en say he wan't gwine ter git no little man no job at all, not eben carryin' water fo' de elefunts.

"Den dat little man act jes' lak he wus crazy, en 'gin ter cuss' ter cussin' and cussin' en de fust thing I knows, Mr. Sampson jams him in de face, en de little man fall down. But he don't stay dar. No, sir! He ain't no more'n down, dan he jumps up cussin' harder en sher, en den he reach down en pull offen de table and turns hit loose right plumb at Mr. Sampson—bang! like dat—en Mr. Sampson jes' crawl up on de table en roll off on ter de flo'."

"Then what happened?" asked Billy.

"Cat'ull I flung, 'fo' God hit is. I ain't stay 'roun' dar no longer en I kin hep atter dat, 'case I know de white folks'll git de nigger, hey don't. So dat wan't no place fer Jeff. So I lights a rag fer home, en I ain't bin outer heah sence den."

"That's enough, Jeff," said Billy, as he joyfully handed the black boy a five-dollar bill. "But be careful, for God's sake, I want you to come down to the hotel and go with me to see the judge. That's the only way you'll be safe."

"Y-as-a, suh, 'fo' God, hit's de truf,' avowed Jeff. "Is Jedge Stovall gwine ter let me in jail?"

"Of course not," said Billy. "You haven't done anything. But he'll want to hear about it, and you'll tell me. Now see that you are at the hotel by 9 o'clock, or I'll have to come looking for you, and that won't be good for you."

"I'se gwine be dar sho'," grinned Jeff. "Y-as-a, suh, I sho' is gwine ter be right dar waitin'."

His mission over, Billy went back to the hotel. Ten minutes after he walked into the office the sleeping soundly. It was the first time he had really slept since Morgan had been arrested.

CHAPTER XIII.

VICTORY.

THE Five United Shows were playing at Vienna, a little town close to the State line, and the last circus stand in the State of Wyoming, apparently, had gone as Moran and Marshall had planned it, and the two thieves, sitting comfortably in Moran's private car, smiled as they talked over their work. Neither could see how anything could happen now to prevent their taking the shows the next day into Alabama, the three stands in Alabama, and then into Mississippi. Once there, and within a week they would be secure from all pursuit.

Moran had heard nothing of Dane since his hired thugs had carried the press agent's inert body down the embankment of the railroad track the night he had been slugged. For all he knew or cared, the young man might have been lying dead somewhere in the woods. As for Morgan, a telegram to Moran that morning had told him the manager was still in the county jail, with things looking blacker than ever against him.

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As the gambler now saw it, it was a practical impossibility for Morgan or Dane to get back to the show before they crossed the State line. Even if they did, he thought, he had destroyed and changed the papers in Morgan's desk in such a way that but little could be proved from them. The name of The Five United Shows had been changed on all the wagons to the new name.

His transportation to Alabama was already bought for the entire outfit, and safe in his pocket. The boss canvasman had orders to pull down as quickly as possible, and the trainmaster was ordered to be ready to move any moment.

"There's simply nothing left for us to do but get the money," said Moran. "Let them come. They'll have the devil's own time even now proving they ever saw this show."

The concert was about over when he and Marshall arrived at the lot. The little man was nervous and afraid that something would happen at the last moment to prevent their getting possession of the shows, and as a result he had been drinking steadily. Moran ordered him to stay close beside him.

When the two men entered the big tent they espied a little group of strangers standing by the center pole. Wondering what they could be doing there, he sauntered casually over to them.

"Are you Mr. Moran?" asked a big man in a tan sombrero, his trousers stuck in a pair of high-topped boots, and a suspicious bulge on one of his hips.

"Yes," said Moran, astonished. "What can I do for you?"

"I'm the sheriff of this county, Mr. Moran," went on the stranger, displaying a highly polished silver badge pinned to his shirt. "I've got an attachment here against this center pole."

"What for?"

"Claims sworn to by some of the workmen with the show."

"How much?"

"Well, that's pretty hard to say, exactly," said the sheriff. "I've got two or three here with me, but there's a big batch down at the office. The men want to know what you're going to do."

Moran's face had grown red with anger. "Do?" he shouted. "I'll show 'em what I'll do. What are they trying to do? Hold this show in this town because of a few measly little claims?"

"Well, can you settle the claims, or put up a bond for appearance?"

Moran was short of money. He had been running the show on what had been taken in at the door. The early season has militated against big houses.

"No," Moran shouted, "I won't pay 'em a cent. I'll leave every one of them here in town."

He turned to Marshall. "Tell 'em to begin tearing down, and to take her down in a hurry."

"Just a moment, Mr. Moran," interrupted the sheriff. "How are you going to take down the tent, when you can't touch the center pole?"

"Touch it? Of course we can touch it."

"Sorry, sir, but you can't. The center pole is now the property of the county court, and can't be touched without permission of the court until these claims are satisfied."

"I'll leave the darned pole here," Moran bellowed. "All I want is to take the canvas off it."

"That's exactly why these attachments were made against the center pole instead of against the wagons or any of the other properties. We knew you couldn't move the show at all if you didn't have the canvas and you couldn't take the canvas unless we gave you the right to take down the center pole. Pretty slick scheme, wasn't it? These two gentlemen will tell you all about it."

He turned to Morgan and Billy Dane, who had just entered the tent and crossed to the group in its center. Moran turned pale, and then white with anger.

"It's all off, Moran," said Morgan. "Will you hand her over peaceably, or do you want to go to jail?"

"What do you mean?" shouted Moran, trying to bluff his way thru. "Sheriff, what sort of talk have these men been putting up to you?"

"Pretty darned good talk, I reckon," the sheriff responded. "It sounded to me mighty like he had enough of a case against you to send you to State's prison for ten years."

"That's exactly what," said Morgan.

"This man is a murderer," said Moran, pointing to Morgan. "He's been in jail at Benton Harbor for the murder of a man named Sampson. If you don't believe me, telegraph there and find out. If you take my advice, you'll hold him for the authorities from Benton Harbor."

"The trouble with that is I ain't taking your advice," replied the sheriff. "I've already telegraphed to Benton Harbor. That's another reason I'm here."

He pulled a paper from his pocket and laid a heavy hand on little Tim Marshall's shoulder. "You're under arrest, Marshall, for the murder of Sampson, and from all indications, we've got a clear case and an eye-witness."

The little man turned pale and started to bolt, but the big sheriff held him and fastened a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, while the half-drunken little fellow began to blubber and moan.

"Well, you can't scare me," said Moran. "We're going to take this show out of here tonight if we have to do it in a wheelbarrow. Those attachments don't amount against me. I don't own anything on this show. It's owned by a man named McCoy, who's not in this State. Those attachments ain't worth the paper they're written on."

"We thought that would be your game, Moran," said Morgan, "so we had attachments made out against everybody whose name we could connect with this theft. We've checkmated your little game, and the best thing for you to do is to throw down your cards."

Moran was wild with anger and disappointment. He had been caught at the State line, with only fifty miles between him and the success of his plans. He raved and swore and threatened dire vengeance. Billy and Morgan and the big sheriff merely smiled and let him talk.

"We'll give you just one chance, Moran," said Morgan, finally. "We're not doing it to keep you out of jail, because that's where you and your kind ought to be. We don't want to stay in this State to prosecute you. If you promise you'll take the first train out tomorrow and never let me see your face around any town I play in the future, I'll let you go. I'll give you just two minutes to make your choice. If you're not out of here by that time, I'll have you thrown into jail. We've got to tear down pretty soon."

"How about Marshall?" asked Moran.

"He goes back to Benton Harbor to stand trial for the murder of Will Sampson."

"Then there's nothing doing," bluffed Moran. "He goes with me, or I'll stay here and fight."

"Oh, all right," said Morgan. "Sheriff, I guess you had better take him along, also."

But Moran had changed his mind again. Swearing vengeance against Billy, Morgan, and everybody and everything connected with The Five United Shows, he walked out of the tent and off the lot. The big sheriff turned to Marshall.

"Come on," he said, "we've got to be catching the ten-thirty train back to Benton Harbor."

As the sheriff walked away with his prisoner, Billy turned to Morgan with a broad grin on his face.

"Didn't I tell you it would work? That attachment against the center pole is as old as the hills, but he swallowed it hook, line and sinker."

"Where'd we have been if he had asked to be shown the attachments?" laughed Morgan.

"We'd had to fight for the show, then, sure," said Billy. "But the sheriff from Benton Harbor did the trick. He scared Moran's life half out of him."

Morgan turned and went to White, who came up at that moment and held out a welcoming hand. "Get her down in a hurry, White," he ordered. "I want to be out of here in an hour and a half."

White turned away smiling, and Morgan grabbed Billy by the arm and started to the entrance.

"Come on, Billy. Let's get down to the cars and get things straight again."

"You aren't talking anything I want to hear," replied Billy, laughing. "You'll have to excuse me for a day or so. I'm going over to Horton for a visit to some friends of mine. Say! I didn't tell you about that girl over there, did I? Believe me, there is the only real girl in the world!"

The End.

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"You, sir, ten years ago all this land around here sold for a dollar and a quarter an acre."

"And what does it sell for now?"

"Taxes."

Not a Challenge.

The postman handed him the letter. One glance at the envelope sent him nearly into hysterics.

"Heavens!" he cried, "the first challenge I ever got."

"Dust" was in big letters on the outside, the envelope said.

"I can't fight dust and——"

So he called to the station house, explained that he knew of no enemy who should demand his blood and asked for protection.

Three blue-coated arms of the law presented themselves.

The detective force hurried out. By that time the desk sergeant had recovered.

He said it meant, "Due 1 cent."

His Favorite Poem.

A Kansas family, so relates former Senator *J. L. Bristow* of that *State*, moved to town, and when the boy presented himself at school he was asked by the principal, among other things, as to his favorite poem.

"The Village Blacksmith," was the response. "I recite it every time we have company."

"Does your father ask you to do it?" asked the teacher of the boy. "He says he thinks it keeps us from having much company."

His Little Scheme.

Roderick—"Great Scot! Has Bilkins lost his mind?"

Van Albert—"I don't think so. Why?"

Roderick—"Just look at the illumination in his house. He has had every gas jet burning for a week, I'm told."

Van Albert—"Oh, that's just a little scheme Bilkins had to increase his gas bill this month. His wife is coming back tomorrow, and he has had been remaining at home and reading every night since she went."

First Time In Years.

"What's up, Bill? You look scared."

"Scared is right. Been a big explosion at our house."

"Much damage?"

"Damage! Why my father and mother was blown right out of the window. The neighbors, they say that it's the first time they've been out of the house together for fifteen years."

Condensed.

Editor—"How's the new society reporter? I told him to condense as much as possible."

Assistant—"He did. Here's his account of yesterday's afternoon tea: 'Mrs Love-Duller bored. Mrs. Rasping gored and wept. Mrs. Embonpoint stuffed.'"

Unappreciated.

Lord Buxton, the Governor-General of South Africa, is an ardent disciple of Izaak Walton, and he tells many good fishing yarns. One of his favorites is about an angler who one day had four hours' tussle with a huge salmon before he was able to land it. When at last he had made sure of his catch he took it home in ecstasy and related his triumph to the mess room. Of course, like all fishermen, he made as much of the affair as possible, and told specific stress on the time it took and the immense weight of the fish, and when he had ended the admirers naively to land. When he had finished he waited anxiously for the praise due to his sleepless and heroism. For some moments there was silence, and then his aunt looked up from her knitting with a puzzled expression on her face. "But my dear Tom," she said quietly, "why did you not cut the string and get rid of the brute?"

Her Plan.

Mrs. X.—"Bothered with time wasting callers, are you? Why don't you try my plan?"

Mrs. Y.—"What is your plan?"

Mrs. X.—"Why, when the bell rings I put on my hat and gloves before I press the button. It's proved to be a most successful method to send simply any, 'My dear, but I am going out.'"

Mrs. Y.—"But suppose it's some one you do want to see?"

Mrs. X.—"Oh, then I say, 'So fortunate. I've just come in.'"

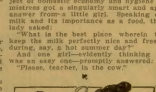
The Best Place.

In the course of a lesson on the subject of domestic economy and hygiene a mistress got a singularly smart and apt answer from a little girl. Speaking of milk and its importance as a food, the lady asked:

"What is the best place wherein to keep the milk perfectly nice and fresh during, say, a hot summer day?"

And one girl—evidently thinking it was an easy one—promptly answered:

"Please, teacher, in the cow."



Mary had a little lamb—
Twas gentle as a pup.
Now Mary don't eat one day
The beef trust grabbed it up.

A Gentle Touch.

Young Dr. Rose had married contrary to his father's wishes. Meeting his son one blowy night out of the window. The neighbors, they say that it's the first time he's ever been out of the house together for fifteen years."

Condensed.

Editor—"How's the new society reporter? I told him to condense as much as possible."

Assistant—"He did. Here's his account of yesterday's afternoon tea: 'Mrs Love-Duller bored. Mrs. Rasping gored and wept. Mrs. Embonpoint stuffed.'"

Provisions to Scotland.

Captain John Stevenson met a recent arrival from the rural counties and speedily got into a chat with him over conditions there. The new arrived told feelingly of the terrible toll of war upon the fair land of Scotia, the sad tales of young men killed and maimed, the suffering of the families left behind. His was a right sad tale in every way.

"Why, boy, we're just plain distractit wi' it," he continued.

"I shall suppose the war has caused the price of provisions to go up in Scotland as well as elsewhere," the captain remarked Captain Stevenson with sympathy.

"Provisions, sir," the right hand of the visitor. "Provections has gone up in price eexpence the bottle."

Left.

Why Brown Left.

Mr. Brown had not a very good opinion of landlords. It seemed little the other day when the happened of sad a boy throwing stones at the cat. Of course he reasoned that any one who would be kind to dumb animals would be kind to human animals, and he hastened to commend her actions.

"Why, when the cat you give all the scrape to the rat, Mrs. Migns."

"Rats, sir!" she replied. "Wot I says, Mr. Brown, is, be kind to the cats, and you'll find it saves yer 'arf the washin'-up."

Traitor and Convert.

Young Hopeful—"Father, what is a traitor, and a pollitical?"

Veteran Politician—"A traitor is a man who changes his opinions to suit the other side."

Young Hopeful—"Well, then, what is a man who leaves his party and comes over to yours?"

Veteran Politician—"A convert my son."

No Fifty-fifty.

"I fear my brother's wife is a trifle selfish."

"Doesn't she share the family joys and sorrows?"

"Yes, but she figures on taking about 50 per cent of the joys and 10 per cent of the sorrows."

A Bad Case.

"That crazy cut over there got no visitors yesterday the warden had to put him in a straitjacket," said the guard at the insane asylum.

"Tough," said the facetious visitor, "that's what I call putting it in a nutshell."

A Practical Cure.

"Why have you switched that tent in your back yard?"

"Well, I have a large family and I'm persuading them to take turns sleeping out there. By the time I get thru nobody will want to go camping this summer."

Perfectly Tame.

"Wombat used to be a great outdoor man, and Barnard sports. Is he reconciled to married life?"

"I think so. I called on him recently and found him sifting ashes with an old tennis racket."

A Proof.

His teacher says Georgie has a wonderful memory. He can run off without a mistake even the most multisyllabic words.

"Yes, I heard him the other day tell the names of all the Vice Presidents."

"So you wrote an anonymous letter to Jack's wife, telling her about his goings on?"

"An anonymous letter? Certainly not! I wouldn't be guilty of such a mean thing. I signed a name to it—Scittious, of course."

Not Asleep.

Every seat in the trolley was occupied when a group of women got in. Going thru the car to collect the fares the conductor noticed a man who, they knew, was asleep.

"Wake up!" shouted the conductor.

"I wasn't asleep," said the passenger, after "Not asleep!" snapped the conductor. "Then what did you have your eyes closed for?"

"It was because of the crowded condition of the car," explained the passenger. "I hated to see women standing."

Justifiable Curiosity.

"Pop, is a party platform like the kind they have in stage plays where the horses race?"

"Of course not, boy. What makes you ask such a question?"

"Ma, if I don't go round like them, how can folks run on it?"

Economical.

Hub—"Look here, Mary. It was only the last month I paid a dressmaker's bill of $76, and here is another one for $80."

Wife—"Well, dear, doesn't that show that I am beginning to spend less?"

Sometimes Very Useful.

A motor car was held up in a busy street by a wagon drawn by two horses. The driver seemed in no hurry to get out of the way, and at length one of the occupants of the motor car remarked, sarcastically:

"Here, I say, my man! What are these things you are driving? What are they for, I should like to know?"

"These 'ere, sir?" answered the carter, flicking the horses with his whip. "Oh, these is wot is commonly called 'orses, an' they're sometimes used for to take motorists to the 'orspital."

A Poor Ship.

An Irishman, having arrived in New York a few days ago, got employment with a lumber merchant. Later he was ordered to take a load of timber some distance away. Having got half his journey he came to a steep hill, and while the horses were struggling to get to the top his boss happened to meet him, and seeing the horses in such difficulty, and Pat sitting on top of the load, he stopped him and exclaimed:

"Do you not think the horses haven't got enough to do without hauling you up this hill?"

Pat, fixing himself more comfortably on top of the load, said, quietly:

"Is that what you stopped me for?"

Then with a crack of the whip, Pat replied:

"Like up, it's a poor ship that can't carry the captain."

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"It's rather queer that in a certain town a day or two ago after a cyclone had visited that particular neighborhood.

"She shook things up pretty bad out there, and she's still shaking his whiskers meditatively.

"By the way, Hi," he added, "that new barb d'yourn get hurt any?"

"Well, dere was one feller, 'I dunno, I haven't found it yet."

Trouble.

"It is well enough to strive to attain perfection, but remember one thing, my boy—"

"What, father?"

"If ever you should attain it you would become most uninteresting."

A Chronic Loser.

"Dubwatte is a habitual office seeker."

"Quite so. He makes a great many speeches, too, but there is one he will never deliver."

"And what is that?"

"A speech of acceptance."

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Patrice—"And what did she say?"

"That he must give up cigars or her?"

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Hack—"They say that when a man is drowning his past life is brought up before him."

Pack—"That happens also when he has a quarrel with his wife."

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"Ah! A package of old love letters, tied round with a faded pink ribbon. I could shed tears at the sight of them."

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Flathush—"Did you ever lose much time being seasick?"

Bensenhurst—"Oh, yes; we lived out there at the time, and we had a cyclone. I spent six days looking for my house."

As a Brother.

At last he realized that she was really in earnest about rejecting him.

"At least," he said, sadly, "at least love me as a brother."

"I do love you," she answered, sweetly, "I do love you always as a brother."

At that moment little Wiegand, her kid brother, came into the parlor.

"Say, sis, did you see me anywhere?" he said.

"Not out here, you little hemstitched, devilish, scheming, smoking brat!" she cried shortly. "You know you're sneaking around to see what you can see and hear. Beat it, you double-jointed, clover-hooked freak!"

Wiegand withdrew.

"Clarice," he said, after a thoughtful pause,

"Percivale?" she responded softly.

"I've changed my mind," he said. "I don't love me as a brother. Just forget me."

The Right Answer.

In a recent examination paper for a boys' clerk's post was this question:

"If the President and all the members of the Cabinet should die, who would officiate?"

Quite a good many of 14, thought for a time, trying in vain to recall who came after the Cabinet, but a few sharp imps solution came to him, and he answered:

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Two farmers met in a certain town a day or two ago after a cyclone had visited that particular neighborhood.

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"By the way, Hi," he added, "that new barb d'yourn get hurt any?"

"Well, dere was one feller, 'I dunno, I haven't found it yet."

"Did you say your husband was fond of those clinging gowns, May?"

"Yes, but he has come to cling to me for about three years."

Perfectly Safe.

"I suppose I'll have to be bored by Flabbub's lecture. He's going to speak on Pikes Peak."

"Then why worry? You can't hear him from that distance."

Slandering.

Professor—"The boys were so entranced this morning that they remained in my lecture all thru the dinner hour."

His Daughter—"Why didn't you wake them up?"

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A Poor Supply.

Touching on the subject of how Noah spent his time in the ark, a lady teacher ventured to ask the question: "Did he do any fishing?"

The Bright Child joined in the conversation, saying, "He couldn't do much fishing with only two worms."

Not Asleep.

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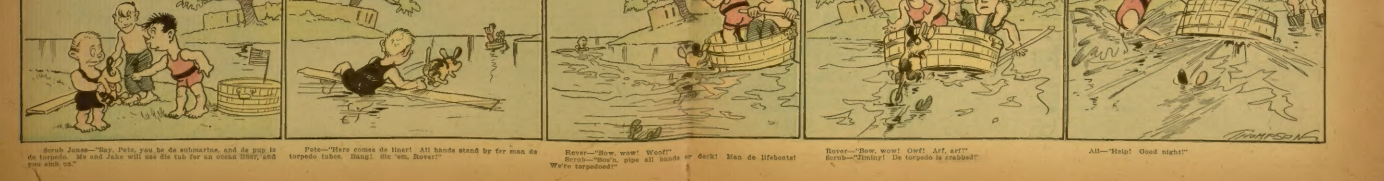
ANOTHER U-BOAT OUTRAGE


Scrub Jones—"Say, Pete, you he de submarine, and de pup is de torpedo. Me and Jake will use dis tub for an ocean liner, and you sink us."
Pete—"Here comes de liner! All hands stand by for man de torpedo tubes. Bang! Dis 'em, Rover!"
Rover—"Bow, wow! Woof!"
Scrub—"Now's, pipe all hands on deck! Man de lifeboats! We're torpedoed!"
Rover—"Bow, wow! Owl! Arf, arf!"
Scrub—"Jimmy! De torpedo is crabbed!"
All—"Help! Good night!"

KEENEYES' SOLUTION

Or, The South Grove Mystery

By J. Breckenridge Ellis

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE next morning at about 9 o'clock, the detective once more repaired to the ambiguous residence of Mrs. Dubois, perhaps after her adventure in the mythical garments of Billy Liver-more she had expected another visit from him. It is certain that the neighbors began to shake their heads at his approach. They had passed over his former goings to and fro, attributing it to his duties as a detective, for it was felt that if any one in town needed to be looked after by a detective, it was Mrs. Dubois. But this third visit seemed to them too many.

The lady was ready to receive him; she was dressed for his coming, for any visit, and he found her charming to behold.

"We shall be quite alone," she told him confidentially, "so we can talk together very comfortably. Am I to regard this purely as a friendly call?"

"I am afraid," said Keeneyes, as he followed her into the parlor, "that you may regard it as an unfriendly call. Indeed, I hope you will feel that I have shown yourself to be a woman of great force of character, and I believe you can rise above purely personal feelings, and view the matter with a wider vision than falls to the lot of women who circumscribe themselves more narrowly than you have done."

"You mean to say that, the wicked, I am bright. Very well, you see what you want, and I shall tell you frankly whether or not I consider you unfriendly."

"I have found out who the man and the woman were who played their incomplete parts in the South Grove on the night of the tragedy."

"And you still believe them to be the sheriff and his wife?"

"My dear Mrs. Dubois, I never believed them to be the sheriff and his wife."

She opened her eyes wide. "But when I told you such was my belief, you assured me you had already thought of it."

"As a matter of fact, I had already thought of it, but I had discarded the idea. I will tell you why I suspected it. Mr. Walsh told me that as soon as Doctor Free told him in what direction his son had run away, the last time Tad was seen, he had rushed after him with all his might. But from Doctor Free I learned—without his imagining that he was telling me anything important—that, instead of the sheriff rushing in pursuit of Tad, he had immediately taken the direction for home. As you know, shortly after that, his wife was cruelly struck down. It seemed like a sheriff, knowing Tad would be out of the way, had jumped back home to assail his wife; therefore I argued, possibly it was he who tried to burn her at the stake on the fatal Thursday night."

"And I think," Mrs. Dubois declared, "that your argument was a very good one."

"Thank you. In addition, when I telephoned to Mrs. Walsh—who must a few moments later have been lying unconscious in her bed, having just been struck down—I was answered by a man who declared himself to be Mr. Walsh. But the voice was not Walsh's voice. However, I told myself that in the fury and agitation he would be like enough his voice would naturally sound like another man's. And at the same time, a stranger was under the finger of suspicion, after making the assault on the defenseless woman, to talk to anybody over a telephone."

"I think your reasoning perfectly unanswerable," declared Mrs. Dubois.

"Thank you. But unfortunately, no logic, however sound, is of any value if the actual facts contradict the reasoning. Now, I am convinced beyond a doubt that the man's voice that answered me over the wire—I found this out by making a man, already under the shadow of suspicion, off his guard. He then, in his agitation, duplicated the mysterious voice."

"But after all, in this you might be mistaken."

"Possibly—if that were the only clew I held. But there are others."

"Surely you mean to tell me more. Do I know the other man you suspect?"

He looked at her with a quick smile. "You know so much more than I can tell," he murmured. "Of course it would be most convenient if you could decide that it was Mr. Walsh and Mrs. Walsh who played their parts in the South Grove mystery, and then I could know everything between us has been coming all from one side."

"Very well. You will remember when Mr. Walsh was killed in the woods, some supposed he had committed suicide. By the way, I wonder if you will not say a word with him on your return that has stirred him to the depths of his nature?"

Mrs. Dubois turned pale, but said nothing.

"However, I promised that the confidence should be all from me to you. You'll remember that strange footprints were found leading from the murdered man to a fence-gap in the woods. These footprints were smaller than those made by Mr. Walsh. Very good. I now tell you what nobody else knows: I made an examination of the woods thereabouts when I was sure of not being spied upon; and I buried the plaster cast of the pair of boots that had made the mysterious prints."

"Under a bush? But how——"

"They were Tad's boots. As a matter of fact, Mr. Walsh had carefully made those prints for the benefit of the police, before returning to this selected spot, before firing twice at the tree and once at his own breast. What had made him so cold-blooded in this scheme? Surely something you had told him. You tremble. Do not grow self-secretion fe-self. To return to the man whose voice answered me over the telephone—that other man.

"You have not answered whether I know that other man, she faltered.

"Do you know who he was? It was who answered me? Suppose I say it was the last man on earth Mr. Walsh could have wanted in his house?

She murmured, "You are so mysterious, speaking of your 'other man'."

"Will? You spoke of holding another clew. Are you to tell me what it is?"

The detective hesitated.

Then he answered, "Mrs. Dubois, you and I have stood in a rather agreeable relationship, and I should be sorry to bring discord into our harmony. I shall therefore not dwell upon other clews, but simply say that from this house I shall go to visit Samson Plim, and after that visit, I shall, unless you decide otherwise, publish my solution of the mystery, first to the coroner I have hired me to come here—unfortunately the sheriff is no longer alive to know how well I have served him—then to the entire community by means of the press."

"What do you mean by pretending that I have anything to do with deciding your actions?"

And this time Mrs. Dubois spoke with scornful severity.

"I mean that the time of my revelation depends upon you. Be assured of this one thing, that Keeneyes never spoke with unexpected firmness, "I know everything; and while I shall not reveal what I know, I am convinced that it is directly concerned with the South Grove affair. It only remains for me to decide whether I shall make the revelation public, and, as I said, in that decision I shall be guided by you."

Mrs. Dubois slightly paled, and when she spoke it was no longer with haughtier. "How can I possibly guide you, sir?"

"Mrs. Dubois, you are not all that I would have you be, if you will pardon me, as the parrot used to say. It is not that you are much more than an ordinary woman. You have been indiscreet, which is the worst fault that in

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

An infant prodigy at 4 may be a fool at 40.

Everybody's business is the gossip's business.

Love may be blind, but it is seldom deaf or dumb.

A wise bride borrows her mother-in-law's cook book.

He laughs best who has the laugh on the other fellow.

Even thin men have a lot of the ills that flesh is heir to.

It's easy to be a philosopher if you have a good income.

As long as a man can keep his temper he isn't his own worst enemy.

A man never knows what is coming to him until he gets it in the neck.

A woman's teeth usurp the functions of her tongue when they chatter.

Misrule is bad enough, but Mrs.-rule is worse—so a married man says.

If it wasn't for the mistakes they make some men would never be heard of.

Some men are anxious to earn money—and others are anxious merely to get it.

Rather than waste time arguing, a wise man will let a fool have his own way.

Keep your hand on your pocketbook when a man begins to pat you on the back.

Don't slow down on the road to success and wait for the other fellow to get ahead.

A man never complains of poor eyesight because he is unable to see his own faults.

When a man is looking for trouble few of his friends are too busy to assist him in the search.

Vegetarians have never been able to explain why the first sin was the result of eating fruit.

Many a woman firmly believes what is to be will be—and that it will be the fault of her husband.

Most men admire the nonsense of a pretty woman far more than they do the sense of a homely one.

It isn't necessary for a man to be a hypnotist in order to get his mind concentrated on the toothache.

If the phoenix of common sense rises from the ashes of a fool's money the conflagration has not been in vain.

Almost any woman can make her husband tremble by merely saying that she has just heard something about him.

It is said that laughter will cure indigestion; but the trouble is the man who has it doesn't feel like laughing at least half an hour of your valuable time."

(Continued From Page 12.)

"I am very busy——"

"So am I. A half-hour will suit us both, therefore."

"Mr. Zellers, to be frank——"

"Mr. Plim, pardon me, it is I who propose to be frank, and exceedingly frank. Do not make any delay or it will be decidedly the worse for you. I've found your missing sweetheart, and——"

Plim made him an agonized gesture not to speak so loud, and at once led the way to his office, muttering that never had he in all his life suffered such persistent and unmerited persecution.

Keeneyes waited until they were safely closed in from the rest of the big building, and then he motioned the merchant to a chair as if the place were his own, and seated himself. Plim shook his head at the chair.

"You'll want to sit down before I have finished," the detective assured him; "you will want to sit down badly."

Samson Plim only frowned at him, and waited to be informed of the object of the unwelcome visit.

"Mr. Plim, I have a great deal to tell you—I hardly know how to begin. I've found out all about the South Grove mystery, and I've found out all about you, my dear sir. Dear me, so many facts rather confuse one, but perhaps I had better begin with my first conversation with you. You will remember, on that occasion, you professed to know your mysterious sweetheart who had disappeared——"

"Mr. Zellers," cried Mr. Plim angrily, "I refuse to discuss the matter with you further. You have come to me time and again badgering me with insulting messages."

"Nonsense. A detective cannot insult an innocent man, and he can only condemn a guilty man."

"If you mean to insinuate that I am in any way guilty——"

"There, there! Pray be calm. I know well enough that you are not guilty of taking any part in the South Grove mystery."

"Then what is your object here?"

"And I know," the detective added, "that the South Grove case, but perhaps I had better begin with my first conversation with you. You will remember, on that occasion, you professed to know your mysterious sweetheart who had disappeared——"

"Mr. Zellers," cried Mr. Plim angrily, "I refuse to discuss the matter with you further. You have come to me time and again badgering me with insulting messages."

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"If you mean to insinuate that I am in any way guilty——"

"There, there! Pray be calm. I know well enough that you are not guilty of taking any part in the South Grove mystery."

"Then what is your object here?"

"And I know," the detective added, "that the South Grove case, but perhaps I had better begin with my first conversation with you. You will remember, on that occasion, you professed to know your mysterious sweetheart who had disappeared——"

"No," said Plim, sullenly; "no, I have not."

"You are still unwilling to give me her name and address?"

Plim shook his head obstinately.

"But, look here," Keeneyes expostulated, "How is it possible that you can be attached to a charming young lady—for I am sure she is charming, or she could never have won the affections of one Samson Plim—how is it possible that you can be content to have this lady vanish as if the earth had swallowed her up, yet refuse to put a skilled detective—let us say, like myself—on her track?"

"I have other methods of search," Plim returned stoutly. "Is this all?"

At that moment the door-desk telephone rang. It was the landlord of the Pamission Hotel.

"Hello, Plim," said the landlord's voice. "Is Mr. Richard Zellers there?"

"Yes, he is here," said Plim, loudly, as if he would have liked to add, "Come get him!"

"I apprehend," said the detective, stepping forward, "that you have a call there for me."

"Just so," Plim returned. "How did the landlord know where you'd be?"

"I left orders to call me here if anything new developed."

He took up the receiver and called the landlord.

"Yes. Is that Mr. Zellers?" came the landlord's voice.

Keeneyes replied in the affirmative, asking quickly, "Anything new?"

"Yes, sir. Doctor Free just called me up to tell you, and told him I'd pass over the message, as he was in a desperate hurry."

"Well, what is it?"

"Mrs. Walsh has just breathed her last."

"What?"

"Yes—it was very unexpected. The operation should have been tomorrow, you know. But it was a matter of heart failure."

"Well—well—go on—tell me all he said."

"That's about all, I guess."

"There must have been something else," Keeneyes persisted.

"Hold on—now I remember. He said that she never recovered consciousness."

"Ah—that was what I was waiting to hear. Thank you."

He hung up the receiver and turned to Samson Plim.

From the words the detective had spoken, the merchant had not been given the slightest notion as to whatnews had been communicated. Keeneyes looked at him with a considering gaze.

"Mr. Plim," he said, "I have no further need to converse with you. I have just heard something that you will find terribly tragic, and I am almost coward enough to run away without telling it. I will tell you, however, that you may face the world when the news becomes general. Mrs. Walsh's heart failed in its action a few moments ago—she is dead. Good-by."

And without pausing for another glance at him, the detective slipped away.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DURING the course of the day, Keeneyes had a long conversation with Tad Walsh, but he could tell him little that the detective had not guessed. Nevertheless, the lad wanted to tell of his adventures in following Tuck about the country, and the story was interesting.

The same afternoon, Keeneyes and Doctor Free were both summoned to the inquest at the Toxville county seat. The following verdict was returned:

"Shot to death by the hand of a tramp whose identity is unknown."

After the inquest there was, of course, no more use for the detective and the physician, and they would have been at liberty to return at once to Pamiston, had a train been ready to carry them.

As it was, they were obliged to wait several hours in lonesome little Toxville, and after talking about Mrs. Walsh's death and the funeral which was to be on the day following, and about Tad, who was to live with an aunt in an Eastern State, and about Mrs. Dubois, who had left Pamiston declaring she never meant to return—after all this, it seemed to Doctor Free that they had discussed every conceivable subject they could have in common.

He was accordingly a good deal surprised when Keeneyes, who was from the edge of the station platform on which they had been sitting, said:

"And now, I have a good talk together."

"A good talk!" echoed the physician.

"Yes, there are still a couple of hours before us."

"But are there a couple of themes left to thrash out?" pursued the physician, staring disconsolately at the one store, the one blacksmith shop and the one dwelling that constituted the village of Toxville.

"Come and see," returned the detective, succinctly, leading the way to the main gain of the forest. "We can sit comfortably on this mossy log in the shade, which our eye for practical tricks has safeguarding ourselves against the horrid calamity of being left here overnight."

"And what shall we talk about?" muttered Doctor Free, feverishly impatient to be back home and escape the other's society.

"You have never forgotten, I see," remarked Keeneyes, apparently, "that on our first meeting, I aroused your ire. I am sorry for that, but promise on this occasion to make you no angrier than I can help."

This at once threw Doctor Free into an ill humor, for the feeling from boyhood had been want of restraint of a very warm temper. He said nothing now, but was decidedly sulking inside the other. They sat down upon the log, where it was, at any rate, as pleasant an anywhere in Toxville.

"You ask what we shall talk about," observed the detective. "Let it be the South Grove mystery. I have taken a warm liking to you, Doctor Free, and you shall be the first to know everything about what happened on that famous Thursday night."

"But do you know everything?"

"I do. I know where you and your wife were at the time you refused to disclose your whereabouts, and I know in a way of thinking you and your wife had on that occasion."

Doctor Free started from the log with an ugly expression. "I forbid a woman to persist in trying to implicate me or Mrs. Free in that South Grove tragedy!"

"Certainly not," sat down. I really mean to tell you everything, and I shall tell you nothing if you stand there glaring at me as if I were poor dead Tuck."

"I'm glad he's dead!" muttered the doctor, but he sat down.

"Yes, and that empty chamber in your pistol might have made people think you had not been a participator in those bloodthirsty words. You ought to thank me for not telling on you."

"Well, I shall not thank you, if that's what you've got to say," was quite innocent, and that's the end of that."

"It wouldn't be the end of it if I told about your missing cartridge, and about the time you tried to choke Tuck to death, and about your repeated declaration that you were glad he's dead."

"Possibly not," Doctor Free slowly admitted, looking at Keeneyes with a steel-like gleam in his eyes. "And perhaps you think I did kill him."

"Well, you see, it's this way: I sent you to watch the dugout, if you'll remember, but instead of watching the dugout, I found you wandering about in the woods near the place where Tuck lay dead with a single bullet in his heart."

Doctor Free once more rose, this time more quickly than before.

"You think I killed him!" he hissed.

"Nonsense, nonsense, Doctor Free. I know perfectly well who killed him."

"You mean—the tramp?"

"Certainly not. Pray sit down while I go back to the South Grove mystery. And try to appreciate my kindness in explaining it to you before doing so to the general public."

"But who was it that shot Tuck?" persisted the physician.

"If you must know—it was Mrs. Dubois. Now, sit down!"

"Mrs. Dubois!" ejaculated the other, staring wide-eyed. "Mrs Dubois! What are you talking about, Mr. Zellers? Where was she? And how and why do you bring her into the matter?"

"You shall very soon hear how and why, if you will perch yourself upon this log," said the detective.

Doctor Free sank back upon the log as if astonishment had deprived him of the power to remain upon his legs, and not as if he were sitting there for the purpose of being entertained.

CHAPTER XXX

THE story of the South Grove mystery is easily explained," said the detective, "and it may be soon told. I grant you that we have two hours—almost two hours—before train time, and think I might stretch the story over those two hours, but I shall not do so."

"You think Mrs. Dubois has some-

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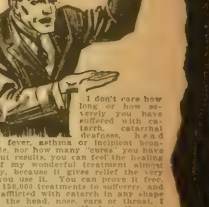

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I don't want you to pay me a single penny in advance. The trial is free. All I ask is your name and address, and I will mail one of my full and complete treatments, charges prepaid. Use it in your own home—try it two days, and if you are perfectly satisfied, you are to send me the small sum I ask for it.

My treatment acts almost like magic, so quickly does it clear the head, nose and throat. It stops the coughing, hawking and spitting. It helps overcome the terrible wheeze and throat of asthma, allays sweating and prevents the distress of hay fever, stops running of the nose, takes away inflammation, gives [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

thing to do with the mystery?" asked Doctor Free, his eyes now bent upon the ground.

"You shall hear. I shall begin, however, with our Pamiston merchant, the grave and highly respected bachelor, Mr. Samson Plim. On a certain day, Mr. Samson Plim went to Kansas City to buy a stock of goods for his store, and on that day he had his picture taken, meaning to use the cut for advertising purposes, tho I have never understood why merchants imagine you would buy their dry goods from seeing a picture of their faces. This, however, is immaterial.

"On this same day, Mr. Samson Plim encountered Mrs. Walsh in Kansas City —you know whom I mean—the sheriff's wife—the lady whose funeral takes place tomorrow.

"Now, I need not explain to you that Mr. Samson Plim felt a decidedly sentimental interest in Mrs. Walsh. I will not tell you so because you know it so well, as did your wife. You and your wife had had heated words about that very matter. You utterly disapproved of Mr. Samson Plim and Mrs. Walsh meet-

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Classified Want Ad Information

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TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—Experience unnecessary. Earn big pay while you learn at home during spare time. Only eight weeks' time required. Steady positions. Write for free book. "A Knight of the Grip," containing testimonials from hundreds of students we have placed in positions paying $1000 to $5000 per month. Address Dept. 871, National Salesmen Training Association, Chicago, New York, San Francisco.

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AGENTS—SELL, DEMONSTRATE AND Deliver Pan. Make $100 to $300 a month profit. Saves Gas, Cooks 3 foods on one burner. Write quick for terms and free sample. Aluminum Mfg. Co. Lemon Set, Chicago.

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PERSONAL

CUT THIS OUT QUICK, IF UNMARRIED, and mail it to us within next ten days, with your name and address and we will give you an opportunity to secure two years' membership in the old reliable Sincere Correspondence Club, free of charge, without spending a dollar of your money, which will entitle you to thousands of introductions and addresses with descriptions of wealthy, refined, handsome, home loving, fascinating people, who honestly desire early marriage. Write quick enclosing stamp for some very large collection of names and descriptions of ladies of means desiring marriage. Address Sincere Club, B820, Valley, Nebr.

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, with Lame Back, Despondency, Failing Memory, Loss of Ambition, unfitting you for work or business. Remember we are specialists in all diseases of men. Book 'Strength' and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave., So., Minneapolis, Minn.

USE OXOCIDE, DRUGLESS TREATMENT, guaranteed for all forms of blood and skin disorders, old sores, ulcers, boils, fistula, poisoning in general. Write for advice free. H. Jackson Clarke, M. D., Denver, Colo.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPER-ous! Big list of descriptions and photos of personal ads from rich ladies and gentlemen seeking. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Janesville, Ill.

LADIES—WHEN DELAYED OR IRREGU-lar use Mexican Pearl Pills; always dependable. "Relief" and particulars free. Sold by all drug stores. Write National Medical Institute, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

4 BOOKS, CHRIST — WOUNDMARKED, Crucified, Risen, Risenwith, and her visions, Nativity of Our Lord, Mystical Marriage, and "Wedding at Cana," for 30c. Klein Co., London, Ark.

IF YOU LOVE YOUR CHILD, LEARN ALL you can about her. A typewritten horoscope shows his character, strength and weakness. Send birth hour—50c. Phil. Sawyer Eagle River, Wis.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ESTELLE. Real Love Story in Book. Can't tell about it here. Sent sealed. Plain wrapper. 10c. W. P. Faunsch & Son, Publishers, 171 East 99th St., New York.

FREE—50c BOX ORANGE LILY. RELIEVES all female troubles in three days. Corrective discases peculiar to women. The Cooper Medicine Co., Case 4-W., Detroit, Mich.

"THE FLOATING CRYSTAL" ELECTROLOGY. Real Hindoostanee Scientology. Your only opportunity. Selling them out—25c (coin) each. Prepaid. Ralph, Akron, Ohio.

LOVERS' PERFUME POWDER, DOUBLE strength and guaranteed. Sent prepaid with secret of fascination, only 25c coin. Scientific Extract Co., Akron, Ohio.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies' descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. Select Exchange, Dept. 14, Kansas City, Mo.

LOVELY SACHET NEVER FAILS. REAL thing guaranteed. $1.75 outfit makes sachet and secrets 20 cts. Union Co., Palatine, Ill.

MEN, IF NERVOUS, WEAK, RUN DOWN, write today for a trial package of Herculin, the wonderful Spanish Vitalizer. Cadwalad Co., 813 West 43d St., New York.

FOREIGN HIGH-KICKING GIRLS. Sensational dancing, etc., 15c. Glass, 214-D, Latrobe, Pa.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed Free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

FREE—AS TOLD. SEND 10c for age and birth date. James Smith, 326 Madison Ave., Chicago.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUB-lication for sure results; reliable. Eastern Co-operative Bureau, Boston, Mass.

MARRY RICH—BE PROSPEROUS AND happy. Write New Home Club, Los Angeles, Cal.

MARRY RICH; HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. Society, Grand Rapids, Mich.

GO ON THE STAGE. EXCELLENT CHANCE to travel. Circular free. D. D. Green, Box 213, Mason Building, Chicago.

FUTURE FORETOLD—SEND DIME, BIRTH-date, stamped envelope, three questions. Mme. Lamp, 2010 Howard, Omaha, Nebraska.

LADIES TAKE COTTON ROOT TABLETS. A monthly regulator. $1.00. Radium Mfg. Co., St. Louis, Mo.

"I'M READY," FASCINATING PICTURE of Bathing Girls, Postpaid (16c silver). Y. Yale Center, Kansas.

MARRY—10,000 WORTH $100 TO $100,000; 300 photos; 10c. Box 1, Box 1614, Denver, Colo.

GENUINE PHOTOGRAPHS UNDRAPED models, set $1.00. Graham, 2328 Christian, Philadelphia.

EXCHANGE CARDS, LETTERS, PHOTOS. Big friendship club. Membership 10c. Jolly Card Exchange, Decatur, Indiana.

WEALTHY WIDOW 27, ANXIOUS TO marry. Box 858, Los Angeles, Cal.

FUTURE TOLD—the BIRTHDATE, FLOR-ence Edwards, Hearst Bldg., Chicago.

ing in a distant city, whether by chance or otherwise, without the knowledge of Mr. Walsh. And you were quite right. I will not say your wife approved of it, either. But she was a friend of Mrs. Walsh's, and was disposed to keep quiet what she knew. You were afraid that if the facts came out Mr. Walsh would blame you for letting your wife act as a sort of chaperon to Mrs. Walsh when Mr. Samson Plim was hovering about. But your wife was not acting as chaperon; that no real harm would come of it. She knew Plim loved Mrs. Walsh, and she knew Mrs. Walsh did not love Plim or Mr. Walsh, but she fancied Plim and Mrs. Walsh could meet innocently. You didn't. Am I not right?"

"Mr. Zellers," said the amazed physician, "I do not know what to say."

"Then leave it to me, for I do," returned the detective, cheerfully. He continued: "On this occasion, Mr. Samson Plim, on meeting Mrs. Walsh—whether by chance or prearrangement I do not know, nor does it in the least matter—invited her to dine with him at a restaurant. Now there is no harm in that, except as people may regard it, or as harm may be made of it. I will say it was indiscreet.

"And you, Doctor Free, regarded it as very indiscreet. You and Mrs. Free were in Kansas City on this day, and it may be that Mrs. Free knew Mrs. Walsh would be at the hotel with Plim, and had come to shed respectability, and you, finding out about it, hastened after Mrs. Free, to put an end to such a compromising situation. I say all this may have been. But only the facts as I know them are material, so I am not insisting.

At any rate, you and Mrs. Free appeared at the restaurant; you went in, you saw Mr. Samson Plim and Mrs. Walsh dining together, or about to do so. Mr. Plim, seeing you, and knowing you would interfere, rose, and advanced to you as if to expostulate with you for spying upon him. He insisted that you go away. Your wife sided with you. All grew more or less ill-tempered and used heated words, and when you examined the table—behold, Mrs. Walsh was gone! She had slipped out another entrance to avoid the argument. No doubt your wife hurried after her. No doubt Mr. Samson Plim upbraided you for your interference. And no doubt you and your wife were in the worst of humors the rest of the day and flew off to different points to cool, before coming back to Famiston. I have nothing to do with that. But I should like for you to tell me if, in the main, I have not given the facts."

"You have most unaccountably."

"It is not entirely unaccountably. When I went to Mr. Samson Plim to question him about what he had been up to in Kansas City, and when I found that he had no intention of telling me, I invented for him a myth of a sweetheart who had unaccountably disappeared, and whom he had not been able to trace since. It was really pitiable with what avidity he seized upon the tale I made up for him, and with what tenacity he clung to it. That showed at once that all was far from straight with Mr. Samson Plim. But to continue.

"Mrs. Walsh came home; the rest of you did not. But to return to the scene in the restaurant, and to tell you something you do not know. While they were seated at the restaurant table, Mr. Samson Plim had presented Mrs. Walsh with a proof of his photograph, and she had sentimentally placed it in her watch; I cannot say she was blameless in this respect. But she was careless in snapping to the watch, or rather, she was careless in handling the photograph. Perhaps I should say she was too violently agitated when she found that you had discovered her with Plim, for you must have threatened to tell her husband, if the like ever happened again."

"That is true."

"Good, good! At last you admit something! And now, let us on. Mrs. Walsh jumped up to run away. She did run away. But somebody else came to that same table. I do not know if she came before Mrs. Walsh vanished, or if she came in time to speak a few words to Mrs. Walsh. At any rate, the lady—Mrs. Dubois—found that in her agitation Mrs. Walsh had dropped the photograph-le Impression of Mr. Samson Plim. Mrs. Dubois put the proof in her own watch. And why? Because Mr. Samson Plim had once been in love with the lady."

"Impossible!"

"No, it is not impossible. Mrs. Dubois was not all she should be; but she was beautiful, and Mr. Plim had once been quite desperate about her. And Mrs. Dubois hated him strongly after Mrs. Walsh. She took that picture, no doubt meaning to use it as a threat against Plim and against Mrs. Walsh."

"But how could you possibly guess all this?"

"Wait—you shall see. When Plim found Mrs. Walsh gone, he found Mrs. Dubois in her stead, and Mrs. Dubois told him very plainly that she had the picture and that it behooved him to be a very good boy. Plim could not argue with her there, for it was as much as his reputation was worth to be seen in the lady's society. So he let that pass. He hurried away. This I learned from the waiters of the restaurant, for I traced him from the photographer's, when I found out about the picture."

"But how could you have found out about the picture?"

"I found it in the South Grove, after the entire community had searched the grounds. I found it and knew it had been taken recently. It was torn and shaped just to fit into a watch, and you will remember the lady's watch found in the ashes, had been found open. It had been sprung open before it fell into the fire, and that is why the picture had escaped the flames. Had it been Mrs. Walsh's watch, the sheriff would have recognised it and would have claimed it. Nobody knew whose watch it was—at that time, not even I knew. But after I had traced Plim to the restaurant from the photographer's and heard that Mrs. Dubois had been with him, I knew the picture had fallen from Mrs. Dubois' watch; and as Mrs. Dubois' watch lay there in the ashes, it seemed a reasonable inference that Mrs. Dubois was the woman who was to have been burned at the stake."

The physician uttered a cry of profound amazement.

"Therefore I worked upon that theory. Now you can understand that Mr. Samson Plim would be very anxious to recover the photograph from the wicked hands of Mrs. Dubois, who threatened to use it against him. He must have gone to her house to plead, argue, threaten. You can imagine the conversation, the passionate appeals. There must have been a struggle at all this. Mrs. Dubois did not give up the picture. Mr. Samson Plim was in despair; he declared that she would ruin him. And the eavesdropper must have been an enemy to Mrs. Dubois and a devoted friend to Mr. Plim. You will remember that Plim saved Tuck's life when you were choking him to death. Well, perhaps Tuck overheard the conversation. He gathered that Mrs. Dubois was fully resolved to ruin his patron, Plim. He resolved to prevent it. He must have hated Mrs. Dubois from private reasons of his own. I know nothing of that, to be sure. But it must have been Tuck who purposed burning Mrs. Dubois at the stake."

"Incredible!"

"Not at all. I found a book in Tuck's cabin which describ-d just such a scene—a woman criminal burned at the stake for her crimes. There was a picture in the book of the woman at the stake; and under the picture, in capital letters, was the legend, 'SHE WAS BURNED TO DEATH FOR HER HORRIBLE CRIMES.' Tuck copied these words; he printed them over the post; and because he did copy them, his spelling was correct, his letters were well-formed and nobody could be more surprised if they'd not discovered his book with that particular leaf torn out of it—that it could have been inscribed by the ignorant negro."

"You found that leaf torn out"

(Continued from Page 14.)

Ty Cobb, Super-man, World's Greatest Baseball Player, Tells How Nuxated Iron Gave Him New Life

This great giant of strength and endurance says he now plays a better game than when he was younger.

Physician explains why taking Nuxated Iron gave Ty Cobb such tremendous strength and vitality after he was so weakened and all "rundown"—says it will often increase the strength and power of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent in two weeks' time.

New York, N. Y.—When interviewed in his apartment at Bretton Hall, Ty Cobb said: "Hundreds of people write to me to know how I train and what I do to keep up that force and vitality which enables me to play practically every day of the entire baseball season. They wonder why I can play a better game today than when I was younger. The secret is keeping up the supply of iron in my blood—exactly what everyone else can do if they will.

"At the beginning of the present season I was nervous and run down from a bad attack of influenzilitis, but soon the papers began to state 'Ty Cobb has "come back." He is hitting up the old stride.' The secret was iron—Nuxated Iron filled me with renewed life.

"Now they say I'm worth $50,000 a year to any baseball team, yet without plenty of iron in my blood I wouldn't be worth five cents. Nuxated Iron supplies that 'stay there' strength and vim that make men of mark and women of power." Continuing, Dr. Sauer said: "Mr. Cobb's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience, which prove conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality, even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. He is 50 to look at but feels at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and hi face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders but people would rather throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron. I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, gripe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by a lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And I might say that in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good; otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

> I am astonished at the tremendous strength and endurance which I so quickly obtained from taking Nuxated Iron. I feel younger and stronger today than ever before in my life, and the proof is shown by the fact that I play a better game than when I was younger.
>
> Tyrus R. Cobb

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

> **A good batter must be in prime physical condition—he needs a cool head, a quick eye and tremendous strength to put the swing behind the bat.**
>
> **Ty Cobb is undoubtedly the greatest baseball player in the history of the game. A short time ago he was weakened and all "rundown"—today he is a miracle of strength and endurance, due to filling his blood with plenty of iron. He says Nuxated Iron has given him new life and renewed energy and put the old-time vim and vigor of youth into his blood.**

NOTE: Nuxated Iron recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret nostrum, but one composed of two well-known and time tested forms of iron which are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach, on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent or more in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund every penny if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time.

Motorcycle Mark

Or, Rivals of the Wheel

By Jasper Merriweather

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CHAPTER XI.

WHAT Mark had said excited the other boy considerably; he looked after the disappearing cloud of dust that marked the position of the speeding motorcyclist, and then turned again to his chum.

"Well, of all things, now, whoever'd expect to run across that feller away up in this part of the country, forty miles from home? I never knew him to take such a turn; and to think it would be on the same day we thought to come!"

"But it mightn't be such an accident after all," Mark told him. "Frap, now, he's come up looking after his father, with some message for him. Then, again, how do we know but what Perdy on learning somehow that we'd started on this trip, instead of going to Niagara, as he might think his pals made up his mind he wasn't going to be left out of the game, either?"

"Why, the woods are just full of 'em, ain't they, Mark?" exclaimed the other, in real or affected concern. "If this here keeps on we won't be able to turn to the right or the left without running bang up against some sort of feller trying to do us up. Say, Mark, you and spinnin' cycles we've sure got to keep our eyes and ears on the job all the time, and that's a fact."

"I wonder, now, if he could have seen us getting these things around the corner before he made up his mind to go and depend on whether there was an open place between, when we started to get a move on."

"But he didn't stop, or even seem to look in this way hard, did he, Mark?"

"No, but that wouldn't tell the story," replied the other. "You know Perdy is a pretty slick proposition; and if he glimpsed us hustling out with our wheels he'd be just the one to go on past without letting anybody think he knew. I'd feel safer if he had seemed to turn and look up here, as most any one would do when passing. It was because he didn't that I got suspicious."

"Then we'll have to dodge him tomorrow, and you'll have to think up another neat little excuse for why we're the same," Bantam went on to say, composedly, just as his chum were so fertile in expedients. He seemed to remember that all that was necessary was for him to uncork another valve in that teeming brain of his, and the thing would be done.

"I did have a little idea that we might go on tonight, and cover another twenty miles or so," Mark mused; "but after knowing what we do, it might be best to stay where we are."

That meant you wouldn't put it past Perdy to lay some little trap for us, and send us into the middle of the wrong road?"

Something like that might happen, when we'd be handicapped by the darkness, in spite of our searchlights, and, besides, I hardly think it would be a good thing for you to keep this up too hard, Bill, you get sored to it, Bantam."

"Oh, I'm willing to do anything you say," the other declared; "but I reckon if we went on further tonight it would seem like crowding the mourner. Enough is as good as a feast, they say, and I think so, too."

Again Bantam started to sniffing the fragrant odors that came stealing forth from the farmhouse kitchen, and from his reference to feasting had recalled the pleasant fact that one was being got in readiness for himself and his chum.

The time that must elapse before they were summoned to the table would seem terribly long to Bantam, for he had of late developed a fierce appetite that never seemed to be satisfied any length of time.

Seeing this, Mark suggested that they find the pump and wash up, so that they would present a decent appearance at the table; for he had noticed that his chum had a very dirty face, and reckoned his own must be nearly as bad, what with perspiration and lines of dust intermingled.

Accordingly they started in to make use of the primitive pump, and after such good results that when the operation had been completed they shook hands with one another, and felt mutual congratulation over their improved appearance.

The farmer had told them to trundle the machines to an unused carpenter shop, which was also on occasion used as a smithy, and where tools were prepaired by means of forge and anvil when necessary.

"I hope they'll be all right here; and the farmer said he had a lock for the door, which he would get after supper," Mark had observed, after they had put the motorcycles away and then, with a mind the dastardly attempt which some one had made in the effort to injure or ruin his property the very night he might he had it in his possession; and the memory was far from pleasant.

"Oh! I guess that'll be all right," said easy-going Bantam, thus dismissing the matter from his mind. "There isn't any Dan Stevens around here to do Perdy a dirty work for him; and I don't believe the sneak's got enough sand himself to try to play any mean game. Anyhow, I don't expect to have anything happen to the machines, unless the old farmer gets gay during the night, and tries to take a spin down the road a piece. I notice that he's some interested in motorcycles, like he had a notion to invest in one himself."

The idea amused Mark, for he laughed out loud.

"He'd better leave motorcycles for young fellows like you and me; and if he has any notion of buying, why, the same in a gas wagon, which would be useful in lots of ways around a big farm like this one."

"There he comes now, Mark, so better close up," said Bantam, hastily; "and oh! I do hope supper's near ready, because I can't stand this smell of food around and getting all these fine smells. Yes, I do believe he's beckoning to us right now, and that must mean business, sure it must."

It certainly did, for the farmer, whose name was Rideout, told them that if they would follow him in they might find places set for them at the table; altho it was getting late he knew the one day they happened to have no fresh meat, and he hoped they could make out with cold corned beef, fried potatoes and about half a dozen other things he mentioned.

Just as the boys had anticipated, the table was fairly loaded with good things, enough to have fed a dozen hungry travelers; and Bantam was getting so much concerned when even Bantam finally found himself compelled to decline another invitation, deeming his duty for half an hour and more.

Afterwards they sat and talked with their host, and told him as much of their business as they thought proper. Of course he was deeply interested, and expressed the hope that they might succeed in getting safely back to Cumminsville on time with the papers.

"And if I'm any judge of boys," he went on to say, heartily, "you're bound to do it, too. I never heard of this Mr. Clifford, and he may be a pretty sharp gentleman; but he can't be more than he's to get up right early in the morning to draw ahead of two boys built like you chaps are. But here comes the missus; and if you don't mind we'd like to have a little music."

Mark, in an unguarded moment, had happened to mention the fact that his friend could play the piano, and there was nothing for it now but that Bantam get busy. But then he was always an accommodating sort of a fellow; and besides, started playing all the latest rag time airs; so that he kept the party amused for nearly an hour, when Mark, who knew that all country folks retired early, suggested that his stock of best tunes having run out Bantam might think of getting a little sleep, as they would have a hard day before them when starting forth again.

One of the last things he asked the farmer about was whether he had thought to lock the smithy where the motorcycles were stored; and he received an assurance that this had been done.

"It lies right out there from the window of the room you'll sleep in, boys," Mr. Rideout went on to remark: "and if you get uneasy during the night, why, just slip down that grape arbor and take a look around," and he laughed as the he considered it a good joke.

"How about you, Bobby, sir?" asked Bantam, who never did like the idea of getting chewed by a bulldog or a mastiff.

"No danger of that here just now," I'm sorry to say," replied the farmer. "We used to have a splendid watchdog, but a month ago he was found shot to death over near Plimpton. Some people would say that he killed sheep, tho I never knew him to touch the property of mine; and that he was shot while pulling down a spring lamb. I've sort of hated to bring another dog around because I value the good will of my neighbors too much to run the risk of losing it that way."

Now Mark remembered about this, and it gave him a little uneasiness; not that he had the slightest notion of wandering around himself during the night; but he saw that if any prowler happened to take a notion to visit the premises while darkness reigned, he was in no danger of being disturbed in his operations.

The boys had been given a comfortable room, and everything was as sweet and clean as could be.

"This looks good to me," Bantam remarked, when they were alone, with a candle to serve them instead of the electric light they were accustomed to at home "and once I hit the hay you won't hear anything from me till daylight doth appear."

"I hope I won't." Mark told him, significantly, "for if you start to snoring you can expect me to give you a punch in the side that'll make you turn over. This is a case where silence is golden, you understand."

"Hope our wheels will be all right," muttered Bantam, sleepily, as he crawled into bed and pulled the covers up.

"Oh! let's forget that," Mark told him. It was very well for him to say that, but all the same he found that he could not easily apply the advice to his own case

The day awake there for quite some little time, wondering what could possibly happen to the motorcycles since they were securely under lock and key. Then he heard Perdy and his prowling around he would not know where to look for them.

Finally he, too, went to sleep. There would be no moon on this night, and hence it he did happen to wake up it would do little good to look out of the window because of the intense darkness.

Bantam behaved himself very well for several hours, and then he must have managed to roll over, for he was sprawled out on his back, giving out loud croaking noises when his companion woke up.

"Here, stop that, and turn over, you!" grumbled Mark, at the same time shoving the stout boy from him.

Just then he was startled by a little flickering on the ceiling, as tho some person might be passing outside, and bearing a lantern; but the boy was Mark's first impression, he quickly noticed that the light did not seem to move, only grew and fell faintly. This aroused his curiosity, and he even climbed out of bed to step over to the window to see what it could mean.

Bantam heard a sudden loud cry that caused him to sit up straight in bed.

"What is it, Mark?" he called out, hardly knowing whether he had heard the other say anything, or thought something had come to him in his dreams.

"Get your clothes on and fast as you can," said the other, already clutching for his own garments, which he had carefully placed on a chair, beside the bed

"Why, is the house afire?" demanded Bantam, not losing his voice in the excitement, for a wonder.

"No, but the smithy is!" came the reply. "Chances are that Perdy Clifford has been mean enough to try and ruin

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GALLSTONES

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our wheels. And unless we get out there mighty quick there won't be anything left of the same, with all that gasoline around to make an explosion!"

Bantam could not say another word, but he hurried to partly dress, tho Mark was out of the window long before he found himself ready to make a move.

CHAPTER XII.

JUST how the clumsy Bantam ever managed to get out of that window, and clamber down the grapevine trellis that led into an arbor, without taking a bad header, he was never able to understand himself.

Quivering all over with excitement, as well as an eagerness to join his chum in a wild endeavor to save their precious motorcycles from destruction, he made the venture. It was rather dark; and as there was no moon, would have been absolutely so only for what light came from the fire at the little smithy in the rear of the farmhouse.

But even tho his method of accomplishing the feat must always remain something of a mystery to him, Bantam presently found himself sitting on the ground at the foot of the trellis, and holding one of the slats in his grasp. As he managed to scramble to his knees, and then arise, he found that at least he had not suffered any serious damage from his fall, which he considered lucky enough.

The next thing he did was to put for the scene of action with all haste. As he arrived, he found Mark as busy as a beaver, pulling down the already blazing boards that constituted the side of the home blacksmith shop, and tossing them behind him.

"Jump over to the well and see if you can get some water—no, hold on, there's a watering trough over beside that, and I noticed a bucket alongside. Hurry! Hurry!" was what Mark shouted at him, never relaxing his own frantic labor for even a single second, tho there was always a chance of an explosion, if the flames managed to communicate with the contents of either gasoline tank.

Altho Bantam was in something of a stupor, on account of the coming on of his bewildered brain so suddenly, still he grasped the idea Mark meant to convey. And after turning rather helplessly two or three times before he could get his bearings, so as to know in which direction the watering trough mentioned by his chum lay, he had a glimpse of it.

This was another case where Mark's habit of observing and remembering small things proved a valuable asset to him in time of need. Had it depended on Bantam now, he never would have thought of that trough at all, the farmer was wont to water his horses, when arriving home from town, with a trough filled at a spring, just a stone's throw away; and yet he had been with Mark when the latter spoke of the need of such a thing on every farm.

When he reached the trough his first act was to look for the galvanized bucket, which Mark had said would be found there. All the while his heart seemed to be up in his throat, for he was anticipating hearing a dreadful crash at any second, as an explosion took place.

It was not his machine that Bantam was worrying about now, but the safety of his chum, who had become very dear to him in the long time they had been going together.

After making a complete circle around the horse trough Bantam managed to stumble over the bucket, and grasp it. As he afterward told Mark, it was the closest call he ever had to "kicking the bucket."

Of course he hastily snatched it up, and dipping it in the contents of the wooden trough, started back toward the burning smithy. He had not gone far to find that Mark had been doing good work, having already managed to tear away the worst part of the burning boards.

"Let me have that bucket of water, Bantam; I know where to make the best use of it!" was the way his worker greeted his chum; and with a sigh the contents of the horse pail went scattering about.

"Hey! what's all this mean?" exclaimed a heavy voice just then, close by, and the burly figure of the farmer loomed up, half-clad, and very much mystified at the strange scene that was taking place on his premises.

"Somebody's gone and set your little old smithy afire, sir, and we're putting out the blaze. Bantam here, just as he took the bucket, and started as fast as he could go for the adjacent horse trough."

Mr. Rideout did not waste further time in asking useless questions. He was one of those men who save the drowning man that would leave him to his fate and his folly in taking desperate chances. And so he joined Mark in trampling the fire under foot, so that when the chance the flames may have had of overwhelming the little building in destruction soon went glimmering.

Indeed, by the time the hard-working Bantam came staggering along—this time with two buckets, for he had found another one, even tho it leaked badly—there was little need of the water, except to help put out some of the smoldering boards that had been hurled aside.

The farmer then hurried back to the house, where a light had already appeared, as his wife was up, and had thoughtfully applied a match to a lamp. He came back with a lantern, and after a brief examination had been made the boys discovered that fortunately not the slightest damage had resulted to their machines because of this mean trick on the part of some unknown party.

Of course both of them felt positive that it was the work of Ferdy Clifford, but as they did not have any positive evidence, the chances were that nothing could be done to force his father to pay the farmer for the damage to his building. But between themselves the two boys quickly decided that they would surely make things square with Mr. Rideout; and if he refused to take any money from them to square the damage, later on they would find something to come up that way to let these good people know boys are not always ungrateful.

The old farmer was furious at the audacity of any one actually trying to burn a part of his property. He declared he had never known but one similar case, and the rascal having been caught, was found to be crazy, so that he had been sent to an asylum, where his mania for seeing things burn could not find further vent.

He vowed that he would get his gun, and stand on guard the balance of the night; and that if the scoundrel ventured to return in order to try and complete his job, he would wish he had never been born.

Mark tried to influence him to let them do the watching, for Mr. Rideout would not hear of it, and packed them off to bed again. It was some time before even the usually sleepy Bantam could lose himself, after all this wild excitement; but in the end he managed to drop off, and in due time Mark followed his example.

Both boys were up early, and after dressing, hurried out. They found Mr. Rideout looking around, and he greeted them as jovially as tho nothing worth mentioning had happened.

"After all no great damage was done, and a load of boards will replace all that got touched by the fire," he told them.

When they had enjoyed a most bountiful breakfast Mark tried to make the genial farmer take some payment, but found himself up against a stone wall.

"The pleasure has been all mine, son," was what the farmer told him; "and it isn't often we get a break in the dull monotony of life like this little visit of yours has been. Nothing owing; and if ever you're up this way again don't you dare pass by without stopping in to dinner. You'll both be as welcome as a shower in June."

And after that, of course, Mark could not insist, altho he was determined that when he and Bantam reached home they would remember the kind-hearted farmer in some way, and see that he did not lose out thru having his outbuilding burned simply because it sheltered their motorcycles, which somebody wished to destroy—possibly to prevent their reaching Judge Wilding, and carrying back the papers that must be produced by Thursday at six o'clock, unless Bantam's rich mother wished the evil-hearted cousin to triumph over her, which was not to be thought of.

Once more the two boys were spinning along over a dusty pike, heading due northeast. They could tell from the changed character of their surroundings that they were already getting to get in the neighborhood of the wilder country, such as they expected to encounter before arriving in the mountains where the Judge was investigating certain properties he owned, in the hope of striking iron ore in sufficient quantities to pay for mining the same.

All the while they kept a keen lookout for trouble. The experience had unnerved and concerned and engineered the attempted destruction of their wheels was capable of making them more desperate, if by this means he might accomplish their detention. If one of them could be made to meet with an accident that would break an arm or leg, that would bring their expedition to a sudden end, and Mark had already declared he believed Ferdy Clifford, or his father either, for that matter, would not hesitate to employ such means if they considered desperate by the prospect of losing the game.

And so, as they went on, both boys were constantly using their eyes to glimpse anything that bore the appearance of a trap. They did not turn a sharp bend in the road without seeing their pace; for, as Bantam suggested, it would be just like Ferdy, seeing them coming, to throw a rope across the thorofare, calculated to wind up their swift career with a terrible smash; for if they had any speed on they would be hung into some tree or rock.

But the morning wore away, and all went smoothly with themselves, tho which proved to be bad in patches. This gave poor Bantam all he could do to manage his motorcycle, and keep from getting away from his guidance, owing to the fact that he had to be constantly twisting to the right and left in order to avoid some bad hole, or an impediment of another kind.

Toward noon they halted at a queer little inn where the road forked again; and while the dinner that was served did not compare with the bountiful spread at the never-to-be-forgotten

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Rideout home, still they had little cause for complaint.

Mark asked questions, and was bothered when he learned that a red touring car had passed thru several hours before. The man could not describe those who were in the car, because they had not stopped, and he had barely noticed it vanishing in a cloud of dust up the road; but somehow Mark was under the impression that Mr. Clifford must have changed his tactics, and was now trying to hunt up Judge Whiting, with some dark scheme in view, and that possibly he hoped to get him to wander off in his company, so that he could not be found for several days, thus defeating the intention of the boys to secure the papers the lawyer was carrying with him on some account, instead of leaving them at his office at home in Albany. However, it turned out later that he intended visiting Mrs. Lightfoot, after spending some days in the mountains, and was carrying these documents with the idea of handing them over to her.

Again the boys were in the saddle and moving on. Mark had asked questions about Old Forge, and they were now well up in the mountains; and was laying his plans with the idea of finding the prospecting party with as little waste of time as possible.

He had told Bantam that since it might be impossible for them to ride all the way back to Cumminsville on their motorcycles, as a last resort he figured on heading for the railroad at a certain place, and taking a train which, with only a single transfer, would, it was to be hoped, land them in their home town some time on the following afternoon.

Perhaps Bantam was pondering over these things as he followed his chum along down the grade. The road was so poor that neither of them chanced to be making very fast time, which turned out to be a most fortunate thing for Bantam.

He kept swinging to the right, and again to the left, as he avoided each obstacle with considerable skill; but this good luck did not last, for at the bottom of the descent, where there seemed to lie a sort of bog or marsh, in attempting to make a quick movement to the left, Bantam's hand must have slipped, so that he misjudged distances. The first thing he knew his machine shot toward the side of the road, met with some obstacle that suddenly stopped its forward progress; and poor Bantam took a beautiful rise, landing with a sickening thud in the bog.

This interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Keeneyes' Solution.

(Continued From Page 15.)

"I did."

"That certainly seems conclusive evidence. But good heavens! How did he manage it?"

"And that I have a very clear idea, for when I questioned him, he tried to invent a story to deceive me, and I could pick out the bits of truth fairly well. He must have had his bonfire all ready, the oil at hand, the legend printed on the headpiece—all? Then he drove to Mrs. Dubois' place, overpowered her, bound and gagged her, drove her to the spot, prepared to burn her. But the escaped tiger from the circus saved the day. Of course he had thought to snatch Mr. Samson Pilm's picture from her watch, fearing it might not be destroyed, or meaning to steal the watch. But the tiger disarranged all his plans. It frightened him horribly. He made a lunge at her with his knife thinking to stab her, at all events—the fire was lighted—but she contrived to wriggle out of reach in such a way that the knifeblade severed the rope about her arms. Tuck leaped in the wagon and dashed away. Mrs. Dubois fled, and the tiger was no doubt greatly astonished."

"But if all this happened—why did not Mrs. Dubois accuse Tuck?"

"My dear doctor, it is difficult to enter into the feelings of so eccentric a character as Mrs. Dubois. Still, I think in a measure I can do so. You will agree that her experience must have been frightfully unnerving. What must she have feared when in the hands of Tuck? Remember Tuck was not seeking money or revenge, only: he was avenging the only man he loved—his master—the one who had saved his life. Mrs. Dubois must have passed a terrible hour or so. There was the fire to which he was going to dread her. Why did he light it before she was fastened to the stake? Because he was crazed with excitement. After she escaped so miraculously, no doubt thinking the tiger running after her, not knowing she had been released by Tuck was most to be feared, she dared not creep to her home—Tuck might waylay her at any strange time—but fled in the opposite direction. She did not return to Pamlston until she learned that Tuck had died. Then she visited the Pilms. And why?"

"I'm sure I cannot imagine."

"But I can. For revenge. Were all her surmises true? Had Tuck confided or accosted the sheriff at the first opportunity. She had an interview with him before she left, and she knew she was in town. She could not show him Pilm's picture, but she told him all about it. And Walsh must already have suspected that his wife was beginning to care for Pilm. At any rate, he did not repudiate Mrs. Dubois' insinuations. No, he resolved to wait and find out if there was truth in his suspicions. He did wait; he waited and he watched.

"Doctor Free, when you told Mr. Walsh in which direction Tad had been last seen, why did not Mr. Walsh follow in that direction? Because it occurred to him to slip home and spy upon his wife. Possibly he had seen Pilm going in that direction. At any rate, he slipped homeward. And Pilm was with Mrs. Walsh. How do I know? Because I called up on the telephone, asking for Mr. Walsh, and Pilm answered, disguising his voice and pretending to be Mr. Walsh. And Mr. Walsh must have been in the next room. Perhaps he made a slight noise. At any rate, Pilm left instantly. And then Walsh rushed into the room and struck down his wife. Later, he killed himself."

"Ah! And you said at the time it was not suicide."

"No, no. I simply tried to draw you out. Then I interviewed Mrs. Walsh, but I accused her of nothing. What was the use? Walsh was dead—and now his wife is dead. Mr. Samson Pilm exists. I do not know how far his friendship with Mrs. Walsh had advanced, but he has been severely punished for all his indiscretions, and Mrs. Dubois could expose him were it not for the fact that she could herself be brought to justice. For it was she, who, as Billy Livermore, came with us to this town. In the woods she came face to face with Tuck, the wretch who tried to burn her alive. Do you wonder that she fled instantly? They were so close that her weapon burned his clothing. If she had missed and if he could have clapped his big hand over her mouth—well——"

Doctor Free shuddered.

After a deep pause he said, "Mr. Zellers, what will you do?"

"I will prove from the torn book that it was Tuck who tried to kill Mrs. Dubois at South Grove, and I will prove from the gold ring that was found in the ashes that Mrs. Dubois was the woman whom Tuck meant to burn alive; for everybody knows that Mrs. Dubois always carried with her the gold ring that was once her husband's. Why no one identified it as her husband's ring, I can easily guess—no one dreamed of the woman's being Mrs. Dubois. The ring is nothing particular; but there is a 'D' engraved upon it. Mrs. Dubois really loved her husband, the one can blame him for deserting her? When I make this accusation, people will believe that she has left town to avoid the notoriety of the revelation. And they will be right. And this is all I will reveal. Your partner—Mrs. Walsh's partner—in the mystery need never be explained. All that interests the public is to know who was the man and who was the woman who played their significant parts in the South Grove Mystery."

The End.

* * *

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A menagerie stopped in a little country village.

One urchin, with more cheek than cash, thought he would like to see the animals, so he quietly pushed his head thru a gap in the canvas and had a look.

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"Here, Agrippa," he yelled to a helper, "throw this lad into the Hons' cage."

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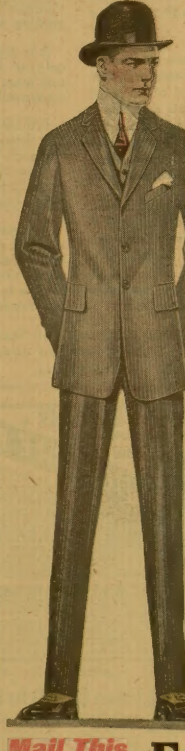

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His Purple Cat.

(Continued from page 6)

shall have gone back to the reservation where I belong. I am sorry that you will have to get up early and set the tables, but I wanted to go tonight.

"You can send the money you owe me by Juan, or by the agent when he comes. I will come to see you some day. Thank you for letting me work for you and allowing me to read the woman's magazines.

"Very truly yours,
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This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

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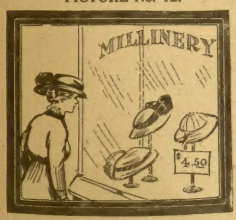

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